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H. MURRAY SMITH

THE
WORKS OF
HONORÉ
DE BALZAC

ABOUT
CATHERINE DE' MEDICI

SERAPHITA

AND OTHER STORIES

With Introductions by
GEORGE SAINTSBURY

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(Translators, CLARA BELL AND JAMES WARING)

ABOUT CATHERINE DE' MEDICI

AND

GAMBARA

INTRODUCTION

This book (as to which it is important to remember the *Sur* if injustice is not to be done to the intentions of the author) has plenty of interest of more kinds than one; but it is perhaps more interesting because of the place it holds in Balzac's work than for itself. He had always considerable hankerings after the historical novel: his early and lifelong devotion to Scott would sufficiently account for that. More than one of the *Œuvres de Jeunesse* attempts the form in a more or less conscious way: the *Chouans,* the first successful book, definitely attempts it; but by far the most ambitious attempt is to be found in the book before us. It is most probable that it was of this, if of anything of his own, that Balzac was thinking when, in 1846, he wrote disdainfully to Madame Hanska about Dumas, and expressed himself towards *Les Trois Mousquetaires* (which had whiled him through a day of cold and inability to work) nearly as ungratefully as Carlyle did towards Captain Marryat. And though it is, let it be repeated, a mistake, and a rather unfair mistake, to give such a title to the book as might induce readers to regard it as a single and definite novel, of which Catherine is the heroine, though it is made up of three parts written at very different times, it has a unity which the introduction shows to some extent, and which a rejected preface given by M. de Lovenjoul shows still better.

To understand this, we must remember that Balzac, though not exactly an historical scholar, was a considerable

student of history; and that, although rather an amateur politician, he was a constant thinker and writer on political subjects. We must add to these remembrances the fact of his intense interest in all such matters as Alchemy, the Elixir of Life, and so forth, to which the sixteenth century in general, and Catherine de' Medici in particular, were known to be devoted. All these interests of his met in the present book, the parts of which appeared in inverse order, and the genesis of which is important enough to make it desirable to incorporate some of the usual bibliographical matter in the substance of this preface. The third and shortest, *Les Deux Rêves,* a piece partly suggestive of the famous *Prophecy of Cazotte* and other legends of the Revolution (but with more retrospective than prospective view), is dated as early as 1828 (before the turning-point), and was actually published in a periodical in 1830. *La Confidence des Ruggieri,* written in 1836 (and, as I have noted in the general introduction, according to its author, in a single night) followed, and *Le Martyr Calviniste,* which had several titles, and was advertised as in preparation for a long time, did not come till 1841.

It is unnecessary to say that all are interesting. The personages, both imaginary and historical, appear at times in a manner worthy of Balzac; many separate scenes are excellent; and, to those who care to perceive them, the various occupations of the author appear in the most interesting manner. Politically, his object was, at least by his own account, to defend the maxim that private and public morality are different; that the policy of a state cannot be, and ought not to be, governed by the same considerations of duty to its neighbors as those which ought to govern the conduct of an individual. The very best men—those least liable to the

slightest imputation of corrupt morals and motives—have endorsed this principle; though it has been screamed at by a few fanatics, a somewhat larger number of persons who found their account in so doing, and a great multitude of hasty, dense, or foolish folk. But it was something of a mark of that amateurishness which spoilt Balzac's dealing with the subject to choose the sixteenth century for his text. For every cool-headed student of history and ethics will admit that it was precisely the abuse of this principle at this time, and by persons of whom Catherine de' Medici, if not the most blamable, has had the most blame put on her, that brought the principle itself into discredit. Between the assertion that the strictest morality of the Sermon on the Mount must obtain between nation and nation, between governor and governed, and the maxim that in politics the end of public safety justifies *any* means whatever, there is a perfectly immense gulf fixed.

If, however, we turn from this somewhat academic point, and do not dwell very much on the occult and magical sides of the matter, interesting as they are, we shall be brought at once face to face with the question, Is the handling of this book the right and proper one for an historical novel? Can we in virtue of it rank Balzac (this is the test which he would himself, beyond all question, have accepted) a long way above Dumas and near Scott?

I must say that I can see no possibility of answer except, "Certainly not." For the historical novel depends almost more than any other division of the kind upon interest of story. Interest of story is not, as has been several times pointed out, at any time Balzac's main appeal, and he has succeeded in it here less than in most other places. He has discussed too much; he has brought in too many personages

without sufficient interest of plot; but, above all, he exhibits throughout an incapacity to handle his materials in the peculiar way required. How long he was before he grasped "the way to do it," even on his own special lines, is the commonplace and refrain of all writing about him. Now, to this special kind he gave comparatively little attention, and the result is that he mastered it less than any other. In the best stories of Dumas (and the best number some fifteen or twenty at least) the interest of narrative, of adventure, of what will happen to the personages, takes you by the throat at once, and never lets you go till the end. There is little or nothing of this sort here. The three stories are excellently well-informed studies, very curious and interesting in divers ways. The *Ruggieri* is perhaps something more; but it is, as its author no doubt honestly entitled it, much more an *Etude Philosophique* than an historical novelette. In short, this was not Balzac's way. We need not be sorry—it is very rarely necessary to be that—that he tried it; we may easily forgive him for not recognizing the ease and certainty with which Dumas trod the path. But we should be most of all thankful that he did not himself enter it frequently, or ever pursue it far.

The most important part of the bibliography of the book has been given above. The rest is a little complicated, and for its ins and outs reference must be made to the usual authority. It should be enough to say that the *Martyr,* under the title of *Les Lecamus,* first appeared in the *Siècle* during the spring of 1841. Souverain published it as a book two years later with the other two, as *Catherine de Medicis Expliquée.* The second part, entitled, not *La Confidence,* but *Le Secret des Ruggieri,* had appeared much earlier in the *Chronique de Paris* during the winter of 1836-37, and had

been published as a book in the latter year; it was joined to *Catherine de Medicis Expliquée* as above. The third part, after appearing in the *Monde* as early as May 1830, also appeared in the *Deux Mondes* for December of the same year, then became one of the *Romans et Contes Philosophiques,* then an *Etude Philosophique,* and in 1843 joined *Catherine de Medicis Expliquée.* The whole was inserted in the *Comédie* in 1846. G. S.

Gambara exhibits a curious and, it must be admitted, a somewhat incoherent mixture of two of Balzac's chief outside interests—Italy and music. In his helter-skelter ramblings, indulged in despite his enormous literary labors, he took many a peep at Italy; and it is evident that for him the country exercised a powerful fascination. In his eyes it was ideal—ideal in its music, in its painting, and in those who fanned the fires divine. His affection for Italy was, in fact, about as ardent and untutored as that for the arts. The story of *Gambara* is an illustration of these two sentiments; it can best be understood when the author's attitude is known.

There is a little about the forceful character of Andrea Marcosini that reminds one of de Marsay. He has an inherent nobleness unknown to the latter, but unfortunately made subservient to a banality which even the genius of Balzac cannot efface. This marring clause of the Count and Marianna is hardly to be excused on the ground of dramatic necessity, since other themes of this nature are not cloyed by baser earth. The introductory scene in the restaurant is good, and stands out brightly contrasted with Gambara's music-ravings and the faint echo of Giardini's cookery conceits. Each is

but the quest of something unattained—a note more grandly uttered in *La Peau de Chagrin,* or *La Recherche de l'Absolu,* or the wonderful sketch, *Le Chef d'Œuvre Inconnu.* But as a fresh embodiment of this thought, *Gambara* may be welcomed, for in such themes as these the novelist is most distinctly in his element.

The first appearance of *Gambara* was in the *Revue et Gazette Musicale de Paris* during July and August 1837, in four chapters and a conclusion. In 1839 it was included in a book with the *Cabinet des Antiques.* Ten years later it was included as *Le Livre des Douleurs* with *Séraphita, Les Proscrits,* and *Massimilla Doni.* It took its place in the *Comédie* in 1846.

ABOUT CATHERINE DE' MEDICI

To Monsieur le Marquis de Pastoret,
Member of the Académie des Beaux-Arts.

When we consider the amazing number of volumes written to ascertain the spot where Hannibal crossed the Alps, without our knowing to this day whether it was, as Whitaker and Rivaz say, by Lyons, Geneva, the Saint-Bernard, and the Valley of Aosta; or, as we are told by Letronne, Follard, Saint-Simon, and Fortia d'Urban, by the Isère, Grenoble, Saint-Bonnet, Mont Genèvre, Fenestrella, and the Pass of Susa, or, according to Larauza, by the Mont Cenis and Susa; or, as Strabo, Polybius and de Luc tell us, by the Rhône, Vienne, Yenne, and the Mont du Chat; or, as certain clever people opine, by Genoa, la Bochetta, and la Scrivia—the view I hold, and which Napoleon had adopted—to say nothing of the vinegar with which some learned men have dressed the Alpine rocks, can we wonder, Monsieur le Marquis, to find modern history so much neglected that some most important points remain obscure, and that the most odious calumnies still weigh on names which ought to be revered?—And it may be noted incidentally that by dint of explanations it has become problematical whether Hannibal ever crossed the Alps at all. Father Ménestrier believes that the Scoras spoken of by Polybius was the Saône; Letronne, Larauza, and Schweighauser believe it to be the Isère; Cochard, a learned man of Lyons, identifies it with the Drôme. But to any one who has eyes, are there not striking geographical and linguistic affinities between Scoras and Scrivia, to say nothing of the almost

certain fact that the Carthaginian fleet lay at la Spezzia or in the Gulf of Genoa?

I could understand all this patient research if the battle of Cannae could be doubted; but since its consequences are well known, what is the use of blackening so much paper with theories that are but the Arabesque of hypothesis, so to speak; while the most important history of later times, that of the Reformation, is so full of obscurities that the name remains unknown of the man* who was making a boat move by steam at Barcelona at the time when Luther and Calvin were inventing the revolt of mind?

We, I believe, after having made, each in his own way, the same investigation as to the great and noble character of Catherine de' Medici, have come to the same opinion. So I thought that my historical studies on the subject might be suitably dedicated to a writer who has labored so long on the history of the Reformation: and that I should thus do public homage, precious perhaps for its rarity, to the character and fidelity of a man true to the Monarchy.

PARIS, *January* 1842.

*The inventor of this experiment was probably Salomon of Caux, not of Caus. This great man was always unlucky; after his death even his name was misspelt. Salomon, whose original portrait, at the age of forty-six, was discovered by the author of the *Human Comedy*, was born at Caux, in Normandy.

PREFACE

When men of learning are struck by a historical blunder, and try to correct it, "Paradox!" is generally the cry; but to those who thoroughly examine the history of modern times, it is evident that historians are privileged liars, who lend their pen to popular beliefs, exactly as most of the newspapers of the day express nothing but the opinions of their readers.

Historical independence of thought has been far less conspicuous among lay writers than among the priesthood. The purest light thrown on history has come from the Benedictines, one of the glories of France—so long, that is to say, as the interests of the monastic orders are not in question. Since the middle of the eighteenth century, some great and learned controversialists have arisen who, struck by the need for rectifying certain popular errors to which historians have lent credit, have published some remarkable works. Thus Monsieur Launoy, nicknamed the Evicter of Saints, made ruthless war on certain saints who have sneaked into the Church Calendar. Thus the rivals of the Benedictines, the two little known members of the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-lettres, began their *mémoires,* their studious notes, full of patience, erudition, and logic, on certain obscure passages of history. Thus Voltaire, with an unfortunate bias, and sadly perverted passions, often brought the light of his intellect to bear on historical prejudices. Diderot, with this end in view, began a book—much too long—on a period of the history of Imperial Rome. But for the French Revolution, criticism, as applied to history, might perhaps have laid up the materials for a good and true history of France, for which evidence had long been amassed by the great French Benedictines. Louis XVI., a man of clear mind, himself

translated the English work, which so much agitated the last century, in which Walpole tried to explain the career of Richard III.

How is it that persons so famous as kings and queens, so important as generals of great armies, become objects of aversion or derision? Half the world hesitates between the song on Marlborough and the history of England, as they do between popular tradition and history as concerning Charles IX.

At all periods when great battles are fought between the masses and the authorities, the populace creates an *ogresque* figure—to coin a word for the sake of its exactitude. Thus in our own time, but for the *Memorials of Saint-Helena,* and the controversies of Royalists and Bonapartists, there was scarcely a chance but that Napoleon would have been misunderstood. Another Abbé de Pradt or two, a few more newspaper articles, and Napoleon from an Emperor would have become an Ogre.

How is error propagated and accredited? The mystery is accomplished under our eyes without our discerning the process. No one suspects how greatly printing has helped to give body both to the envy which attends persons in high places, and to the popular irony which sums up the converse view of every great historical fact. For instance, every bad horse in France that needs flogging is called after the Prince de Polignac; and so who knows what opinion the future may hold as to the Prince de Polignac's *coup d'Etat?* In consequence of a caprice of Shakespeare's—a stroke of revenge perhaps, like that of Beaumarchais on Bergasse (Begearss)—Falstaff, in England, is a type of the grotesque; his name raises a laugh, he is the King of Buffoons. Now, instead of being enormously fat, ridiculously amorous, vain, old, drunken, and a corrupter of youth, Falstaff was one of the most important figures of his time, a Knight of the Garter, holding high command. At the date of Henry V.'s accession, Falstaff was at most four-and-thirty. This General, who distinguished himself at the battle of Agincourt, where he took

the Duc d'Alençon prisoner, in 1420 took the town of Montereau, which was stoutly defended. Finally, under Henry VI., he beat ten thousand Frenchmen with fifteen hundred men who were dropping with fatigue and hunger. So much for valor!

If we turn to literature, Rabelais, among the French, a sober man who drank nothing but water, is thought of as a lover of good cheer and a persistent sot. Hundreds of absurd stories have been coined concerning the author of one of the finest books in French literature, *Pantagruel*.

Aretino, Titian's friend, and the Voltaire of his day, is now credited with a reputation, in complete antagonism with his works and character, which he acquired by his over free wit, characteristic of the writings of an age when gross jests were held in honor, and queens and cardinals indited tales which are now considered licentious. Instances might be infinitely multiplied.

In France, and at the most important period of our history, Catherine de' Medici has suffered more from popular error than any other woman, unless it be Brunehaut or Frédégonde; while Marie de' Medici, whose every action was prejudicial to France, has escaped the disgrace that should cover her name. Marie dissipated the treasure amassed by Henri IV.; she never purged herself of the suspicion that she was cognizant of his murder; Epernon, who had long known Ravaillac, and who did not parry his blow, was *intimate* with the Queen; she compelled her son to banish her from France, where she was fostering the rebellion of her other son, Gaston; and Richelieu's triumph over her on the *Journée des Dupes* was due solely to the Cardinal's revealing to Louis XIII. certain documents secreted after the death of Henri IV.

Catherine de' Medici, on the contrary, saved the throne of France, she maintained the Royal authority under circumstances to which more than one great prince would have succumbed. Face to face with such leaders of the factions and ambitions of the houses of Guise and of Bourbon as the two

Cardinals de Lorraine and the two "Balafrés," the two Princes de Condé, Queen Jeanne d'Albret, Henri IV., the Connétable de Montmorency, Calvin, the Colignys, and Théodore de Bèze, she was forced to put forth the rarest fine qualities, the most essential gifts of statesmanship, under the fire of the Calvinist press. These, at any rate, are indisputable facts. And to the student who digs deep into the history of the sixteenth century in France, the figure of Catherine de' Medici stands out as that of a great king.

When once calumnies are undermined by facts laboriously brought to light from under the contradictions of pamphlets and false anecdotes, everything is explained to the glory of this wonderful woman, who had none of the weakness of her sex, who lived chaste in the midst of the gallantries of the most licentious Court in Europe, and who, notwithstanding her lack of money, erected noble buildings, as if to make good the losses caused by the destructive Calvinists, who injured Art as deeply as they did the body politic.

Hemmed in between a race of princes who proclaimed themselves the heirs of Charlemagne, and a factious younger branch that was eager to bury the Connétable de Bourbon's treason under the throne; obliged, too, to fight down a heresy on the verge of devouring the Monarchy, without friends, and aware of treachery in the chiefs of the Catholic party and of republicanism in the Calvinists, Catherine used the most dangerous but the surest of political weapons—Craft. She determined to deceive by turns the party that was anxious to secure the downfall of the House of Valois, the Bourbons who aimed at the Crown, and the Reformers—the Radicals of that day, who dreamed of an impossible republic, like those of our own day, who, however, have nothing to reform. Indeed, so long as she lived, the Valois sat on the throne. The great de Thou understood the worth of this woman when he exclaimed, on hearing of her death:

"It is not a woman, it is Royalty that dies in her!"

Catherine had, in fact, the sense of Royalty in the highest degree, and she defended it with admirable courage and per-

sistency. The reproaches flung at her by Calvinist writers are indeed her glory; she earned them solely by her triumphs. And how was she to triumph but by cunning? Here lies the whole question.

As to violence—that method bears on one of the most hotly disputed points of policy, which, in recent days, has been answered here, on the spot where a big stone from Egypt has been placed to wipe out the memory of regicide, and to stand as an emblem of the materialistic policy which now rules us; it was answered at les Carmes and at the Abbaye; it was answered on the steps of Saint Roch; it was answered in front of the Louvre in 1830, and again by the people against the King, as it has since been answered once more by la Fayette's "best of all republics" against the republican rebellion, at Saint-Merri and the Rue Transnonnain.

Every power, whether legitimate or illegitimate, must defend itself when it is attacked; but, strange to say, while the people is heroic when it triumphs over the nobility, the authorities are murderers when they oppose the people! And, finally, if after their appeal to force they succumb, they are regarded as effete idiots. The present Government (1840) will try to save itself, by two laws, from the same evil as attacked Charles X., and which he tried to scotch by two decrees. Is not this a bitter mockery? May those in power meet cunning with cunning? Ought they to kill those who try to kill them?

The massacres of the Revolution are the reply to the massacre of Saint-Bartholomew. The People, being King, did by the nobility and the King as the King and the nobility did by the rebels in the sixteenth century. And popular writers, who know full well that, under similar conditions, the people would do the same again, are inexcusable when they blame Catherine de' Medici and Charles IX.

"All power is a permanent conspiracy," said Casimir Périer, when teaching what power ought to be. We admire the anti-social maxims published by audacious writers; why, then, are social truths received in France with such disfavor

when they are boldly stated? This question alone sufficiently accounts for historical mistakes. Apply the solution of this problem to the devastating doctrines which flatter popular passion, and to the conservative doctrines which would repress the ferocious or foolish attempts of the populace, and you will see the reason why certain personages are popular or unpopular. Laubardemont and Laffemas, like some people now living, were devoted to the maintenance of the power they believed in. Soldiers and judges, they obeyed a Royal authority. D'Orthez, in our day, would be discharged from office for misinterpreting orders from the Ministry, but Charles X. left him to govern his province. The power of the masses is accountable to no one; the power of one is obliged to account to its subjects, great and small alike.

Catherine, like Philip II. and the Duke of Alva, like the Guises and Cardinal Granvelle, foresaw the future to which the Reformation was dooming Europe. They saw monarchies, religion, and power all overthrown. Catherine, from the Cabinet of the French kings, forthwith issued sentence of death on that inquiring spirit which threatened modern society—a sentence which Louis XIV. finally carried out. The revocation of the Edict of Nantes was a measure that proved unfortunate, simply in consequence of the irritation Louis XIV. had aroused in Europe. At any other time England, Holland, and the German Empire would not have encouraged on their territory French exiles and French rebels.

Why, in these days, refuse to recognize the greatness which the majestic adversary of that most barren heresy derived from the struggle itself? Calvinists have written strongly against Charles IX.'s stratagems; but travel through France: as you see the ruins of so many fine churches destroyed, and consider the vast breaches made by religious fanatics in the social body; when you learn the revenges they took, while deploring the mischief of individualism—the plague of France to-day, of which the germ lay in the questions of liberty of conscience which they stirred up—you will ask

yourself on which side were the barbarians. There are always, as Catherine says in the third part of this Study, "unluckily, in all ages, hypocritical writers ready to bewail two hundred scoundrels killed in due season." Cæsar, who tried to incite the Senate to pity for Catiline's party, would very likely have conquered Cicero if he had had newspapers and an Opposition at his service.

Another consideration accounts for Catherine's historical and popular disfavor. In France the Opposition has always been Protestant, because its policy has never been anything but negative; it has inherited the theories of the Lutherans, the Calvinists, and the Protestants on the terrible texts of liberty, tolerance, progress, and philanthropy. The opponents of power spent two centuries in establishing the very doubtful doctrine of freewill. Two more were spent in working out the first corollary of freewill—liberty of conscience. Our age is striving to prove the second—political liberty.

Standing between the fields already traversed and the fields as yet untrodden, Catherine and the Church proclaimed the salutary principle of modern communities, *Una fides, unus Dominus,* but asserting their right of life and death over all innovators. Even if she had been conquered, succeeding times have shown that Catherine was right. The outcome of freewill, religious liberty, and political liberty (note, this does not mean *civil* liberty) is France as we now see it.

And what is France in 1840? A country exclusively absorbed in material interests, devoid of patriotism, devoid of conscience; where authority is powerless; where electoral rights, the fruit of freewill and political liberty, raise none but mediocrities; where brute force is necessary to oppose the violence of the populace; where discussion, brought to bear on the smallest matter, checks every action of the body politic; and where individualism—the odious result of the indefinite subdivision of property, which destroys family cohesion—will devour everything, even the nation, which sheer selfishness will some day lay open to invasion. Men will say, "Why not the Tzar?" as they now say, "Why not the Duc

d'Orléans?" We do not care for many things even now; fifty years hence we shall care for nothing.

Therefore, according to Catherine—and according to all who wish to see Society soundly organized—man as a social unit, as a subject, has no freewill, has no right to accept the dogma of liberty of conscience, or to have political liberty. Still, as no community can subsist without some guarantee given to the subject against the sovereign, the subject derives from that certain liberties under restrictions. Liberty—no, but liberties—yes; well defined and circumscribed liberties. This is in the nature of things. For instance, it is beyond human power to fetter freedom of thought; and no sovereign may ever tamper with money.

The great politicians who have failed in this long contest—it has gone on for five centuries—have allowed their subjects wide liberties; but they never recognize their liberty to publish anti-social opinions, nor the unlimited freedom of the subject. To them the words *subject* and *free* are, politically speaking, a contradiction in terms; and, in the same way, the statement that all citizens are equal is pure nonsense, and contradicted by Nature every hour. To acknowledge the need for religion, the need for authority, and at the same time to leave all men at liberty to deny religion, to attack its services, to oppose the exercise of authority by the public and published expression of opinion, is an impossibility such as the Catholics of the sixteenth century would have nothing to say to. Alas! the triumph of Calvinism will cost France more yet than it has ever done; for the sects of to-day—religious, political, humanitarian, and leveling—are the train of Calvinism; and when we see the blunders of those in power, their contempt for intelligence, their devotion to those material interests in which they seek support, and which are the most delusive of all props, unless by the special aid of Providence the genius of destruction must certainly win the day from the genius of conservatism. The attacking forces, who have nothing to lose, and everything to win, are thoroughly in agreement; whereas their wealthy opponents refuse to

make any sacrifice of money or of self-conceit to secure defenders.

Printing came to the aid of the resistance inaugurated by the Vaudois and the Albigenses. As soon as human thought—no longer condensed, as it had necessarily been in order to preserve the most communicable form—had assumed a multitude of garbs and become the very people, instead of remaining in some sense divinely axiomatic, there were two vast armies to contend with—that of ideas and that of men. Royal power perished in the struggle, and we, in France, at this day are looking on at its last coalition with elements which make it difficult, not to say impossible.

Power is action; the electoral principle is discussion. No political action is possible when discussion is permanently established. So we ought to regard the woman as truly great who foresaw that future, and fought it so bravely. The House of Bourbon was able to succeed to the House of Valois, and owed it to Catherine de' Medici that it found that crown to wear. If the second Balafré had been alive, it is very doubtful that the Béarnais, strong as he was, could have seized the throne, seeing how dearly it was sold by the Duc de Mayenne and the remnant of the Guise faction. The necessary steps taken by Catherine, who had the deaths of François II. and Charles IX. on her soul—both dying opportunely for her safety—are not, it must be noted, what the Calvinist and modern writers blame her for! Though there was no poisoning, as some serious authors have asserted, there were other not less criminal plots. It is beyond question that she hindered Paré from saving one, and murdered the other morally by inches.

But the swift death of François II. and the skilfully contrived end of Charles IX. did no injury to Calvinist interests. The causes of these two events concerned only the uppermost sphere, and were never suspected by writers or by the lower orders at the time; they were guessed only by de Thou, by l'Hôpital, by men of the highest talents, or the chiefs of the two parties who coveted and clung to the Crown, and who thought such means indispensable.

Popular songs, strange to say, fell foul of Catherine's morality. The anecdote is known of a soldier who was roasting a goose in the guardroom of the Château of Tours while Catherine and Henri IV. were holding a conference there, and who sang a ballad in which the Queen was insultingly compared to the largest cannon in the hands of the Calvinists. Henri IV. drew his sword to go out and kill the man; Catherine stopped him, and only shouted out:

"It is Catherine who provides the goose!"

Though the executions at Amboise were attributed to Catherine, and the Calvinists made that able woman responsible for all the inevitable disasters of the struggle, she must be judged by posterity, like Robespierre at a future date.

And Catherine was cruelly punished for her preference for the Duc d'Anjou, which made her hold her two elder sons so cheap. Henri III. having ceased, like all spoilt children, to care for his mother, rushed voluntarily into such debauchery as made him, what the mother had made Charles IX., a childless husband, a king without an heir. Unhappily, Catherine's youngest son, the Duc d'Alençon, died—a natural death. The Queen-mother made every effort to control her son's passions. History preserves the tradition of a supper to nude women given in the banqueting-hall at Chenonceaux on his return from Poland, but it did not cure Henri III. of his bad habits.

This great Queen's last words summed up her policy, which was indeed so governed by good sense that we see the Cabinets of every country putting it into practice in similar circumstances.

"Well cut, my son," said she, when Henri III. came to her, on her deathbed, to announce that the enemy of the throne had been put to death. "Now you must sew up again."

She thus expressed her opinion that the sovereign must make friends with the House of Lorraine, and make it useful, as the only way to hinder the effects of the Guises' hatred, by giving them a hope of circumventing the King. But this indefatigable cunning of the Italian and the woman was

incompatible with Henri III.'s life of debauchery. When once the Great Mother was dead, the Mother of Armies (*Mater castrorum*), the policy of the Valois died too.

Before attempting to write this picture of manners in action, the author patiently and minutely studied the principal reigns of French history, the quarrels of the Burgundians and the Armagnacs, and those of the Guises and the Valois, each in the forefront of a century. His purpose was to write a picturesque history of France. Isabella of Bavaria, Catherine and Marie de' Medici, each fills a conspicuous place, dominating from the fourteenth to the seventeenth centuries, and leading up to Louis XIV.

Of these three queens, Catherine was the most interesting and the most beautiful. Hers was a manly rule, not disgraced by the terrible amours of Isabella, nor those, even more terrible though less known, of Marie de' Medici. Isabella brought the English into France to oppose her son, was in love with her brother-in-law, the Duc d'Orléans, and with Boisbourdon. Marie de' Medici's account is still heavier. Neither of them had any political genius.

In the course of these studies and comparisons, the author became convinced of Catherine's greatness; by initiating himself into the peculiar difficulties of her position, he discerned how unjust historians, biased by Protestantism, had been to this queen; and the outcome was the three sketches here presented, in which some erroneous opinions of her, of those who were about her, and of the aspect of the times, are combated.

The work is placed among my Philosophical Studies, because it illustrates the spirit of a period, and plainly shows the influence of opinions.

But before depicting the political arena on which Catherine comes into collision with the two great obstacles in her career, it is necessary to give a short account of her previous life from the point of view of an impartial critic, so that

the reader may form a general idea of this large and royal life up to the time when the first part of this narrative opens.

Never at any period, in any country, or in any ruling family was there more contempt felt for legitimacy than by the famous race of the Medici (in French commonly written and pronounced Medicis). They held the same opinion of monarchy as is now professed in Russia: The ruler on whom the crown devolves is the real and legitimate monarch. Mirabeau was justified in saying, "There has been but one mésalliance in my family—that with the Medici;" for, notwithstanding the exertions of well-paid genealogists, it is certain that the Medici, till the time of Avérardo de' Medici, gonfaloniere of Florence in 1314, were no more than Florentine merchants of great wealth. The first personage of the family who filled a conspicuous place in the history of the great Tuscan Republic was Salvestro de' Medici, gonfaloniere in 1378. This Salvestro had two sons—Cosmo and Lorenzo de' Medici.

From Cosmo descended Lorenzo the Magnificent, the Duc de Nemours, the Duke of Urbino, Catherine's father, Pope Leo X., Pope Clement VII., and Alessandro, not indeed Duke of Florence, as he is sometimes called, but Duke *della città di Penna,* a title created by Pope Clement VII. as a step towards that of Grand Duke of Tuscany.

Lorenzo's descendants were Lorenzino—the Brutus of Florence—who killed Duke Alessandro; Cosmo, the first Grand Duke, and all the rulers of Florence till 1737, when the family became extinct.

But neither of the two branches—that of Cosmo or that of Lorenzo—succeeded in a direct line, till the time when Marie de' Medici's father subjugated Tuscany, and the Grand Dukes inherited in regular succession. Thus Alessandro de' Medici, who assumed the title of Duke *della città di Penna,* and whom Lorenzino assassinated, was the son of the Duke of Urbino, Catherine's father, by a Moorish slave. Hence Lorenzino, the legitimate son of Lorenzo, had a double right to kill Alessandro, both as a usurper in the family and as an oppressor of the city. Some historians have indeed supposed

that Alessandro was the son of Clement VII. The event that led to the recognition of this bastard as head of the Republic was his marriage with Margaret of Austria, the natural daughter of Charles V.

Francesco de' Medici, the husband of Bianca Capello, recognized as his son a child of low birth bought by that notorious Venetian lady; and, strange to say, Fernando, succeeding Francesco, upheld the hypothetical rights of this boy. Indeed, this youth, known as Don Antonio de' Medici, was recognized by the family during four ducal reigns; he won the affection of all, did them important service, and was universally regretted.

Almost all the early Medici had natural children, whose lot was in every case splendid. The Cardinal Giulio de' Medici, Pope Clement VII., was the illegitimate son of Giuliano I. Cardinal Ippolito de' Medici was also a bastard, and he was within an ace of being Pope and head of the family.

Certain inventors of anecdote have a story that the Duke of Urbino, Catherine's father, told her: *"A figlia d'inganno non manca mai figliuolanza"* (A clever woman can always have children, *à propos* to some natural defect in Henri, the second son of François I., to whom she was betrothed). This Lorenzo de' Medici, Catherine's father, had married, for the second time, in 1518, Madeleine de la Tour d'Auvergne, and died in 1519, a few days after his wife, who died in giving birth to Catherine. Catherine was thus fatherless and motherless as soon as she saw the light. Hence the strange events of her childhood, chequered by the violent struggles of the Florentines, in the attempt to recover their liberty, against the Medici who were determined to govern Florence, but who were so circumspect in their policy that Catherine's father took the title of Duke of Urbino.

At his death, the legitimate head of the House of the Medici was Pope Leo X., who appointed Giuliano's illegitimate son, Giulio de' Medici, then Cardinal, Governor of Florence. Leo X. was Catherine's grand-uncle, and this Cardinal Giulio,

afterwards Clement VII., was her *left-handed* uncle only. This it was which made Brantôme so wittily speak of that Pope as an "uncle in Our Lady."

During the siege by the Medici to regain possession of Florence, the Republican party, not satisfied with having shut up Catherine, then nine years old, in a convent, after stripping her of all her possessions, proposed to expose her to the fire of the artillery, between two battlements—the suggestion of a certain Battista Cei. Bernardo Castiglione went even further in a council held to determine on some conclusion tc the business; he advised that, rather than surrender Catherine to the Pope who demanded it, she should be handed over to the tender mercies of the soldiers. All revolutions of the populace are alike. Catherine's policy, always in favor of royal authority, may have been fostered by such scenes, which an Italian girl of nine could not fail to understand.

Alessandro's promotion, to which Clement VII., himself a bastard, largely contributed, was no doubt owing partly to the fact of his being illegitimate, and to Charles V.'s affection for his famous natural daughter Margaret. Thus the Pope and the Emperor were moved by similar feelings. At this period Venice was mistress of the commerce of the world; Rome governed its morals; Italy was still supreme, by the poets, the generals, and the statesmen who were her sons. At no other time has any one country had so curious or so various a multitude of men of genius. There were so many, that the smallest princelings were superior men. Italy was overflowing with talent, daring, science, poetry, wealth, and gallantry, though rent by constant internal wars, and at all times the arena on which conquerors met tc fight for her fairest provinces.

When men are so great, they are not afraid to confess their weakness: hence, no doubt, this golden age for bastards. And it is but justice to declare that these illegitimate sons of the Medici were ardent for the glory and the advancement of the family, alike in possessions and in power. And as soon as the Duke *della città di Penna,* the Moorish slave's

son, was established as Tyrant of Florence, he took up the interest shown by Pope Clement VII. for Lorenzo II.'s daughter, now eleven years of age.

As we study the march of events and of men in that strange sixteenth century, we must never forget that the chief element of political conduct was unremitting craft, destroying in every nature the upright conduct, the *squareness* which imagination looks for in eminent men. In this, especially, lies Catherine's absolution. This observation, in fact, disposes of all the mean and foolish accusations brought against her by the writers of the reformed faith. It was indeed the golden age of this type of policy, of which Machiavelli and Spinoza formulated the code, and Hobbes and Montesquieu; for the Dialogue of "Sylla and Eucrates" expresses Montesquieu's real mind, which he could not set forth in any other form in consequence of his connection with the Encyclopedists. These principles are to this day the unconfessed morality of every Cabinet where schemes of vast dominion are worked out. In France we were severe on Napoleon when he exerted this Italian genius which was in his blood, and its plots did not always succeed; but Charles V., Catherine, Philip II., Giulio II., would have done just as he did in the affairs of Spain.

At the time when Catherine was born, history, if related from the point of view of honesty, would seem an impossible romance. Charles V., while forced to uphold the Catholic Church against the attacks of Luther, who by threatening the tiara threatened his throne, allowed Rome to be besieged, and kept Pope Clement VII. in prison. This same Pope, who had no more bitter foe than Charles V., cringed to him that he might place Alessandro de' Medici at Florence, and the Emperor gave his daughter in marriage to the bastard Duke. No sooner was he firmly settled there than Alessandro, in concert with the Pope, attempted to injure Charles V. by an alliance, through Catherine de' Medici, with Francis I., and both promised to assist the French king to conquer Italy.

Lorenzino de' Medici became Alessandro's boon companion,

and pandered to him to get an opportunity of killing him; and Filippo Strozzi, one of the loftiest spirits of that age, regarded this murder with such high esteem that he vowed that each of his sons should marry one of the assassin's daughters. The sons religiously fulfilled the father's pledge at a time when each of them, under Catherine's protection, could have made a splendid alliance; for one was Doria's rival, and the other Marshal of France.

Cosmo de' Medici, Alessandro's successor, avenged the death of the Tyrant with great cruelty, and persistently for twelve years, during which his hatred never flagged against the people who had, after all, placed him in power. He was eighteen years of age when he succeeded to the government; his first act was to annul the rights of Alessandro's legitimate sons, at the time when he was avenging Alessandro! Charles V. confirmed the dispossession of his grandson, and recognized Cosmo instead of Alessandro's son.

Cosmo, raised to the throne by Cardinal Cibo, at once sent the prelate into exile. Then Cardinal Cibo accused his creature, Cosmo, the first Grand Duke, of having tried to poison Alessandro's son. The Grand Duke, as jealous of his authority as Charles V. was of his, abdicated, like the Emperor, in favor of his son Francesco, after ordering the death of Don Garcias, his other son, in revenge for that of Cardinal Giovanni de' Medici, whom Garcias had assassinated.

Cosmo I. and his son Francesco, who ought to have been devoted, soul and body, to the Royal House of France, the only power able to lend them support, were the humble servants of Charles V. and Philip II., and consequently the secret, perfidious, and cowardly foes of Catherine de' Medici, one of the glories of their race.

Such are the more important features—contradictory and illogical indeed—the dishonest acts, the dark intrigues of the House of the Medici alone. From this sketch some idea may be formed of the other princes of Italy and Europe. Every envoy from Cosmo I. to the Court of France had secret in-

structions to poison Strozzi, Queen Catherine's relation, when he should find him there. Charles V. had three ambassadors from Francis I. murdered.

It was early in October 1533 that the Duke *della città di Penna* left Florence for Leghorn, accompanied by Catherine de' Medici, sole heiress of Lorenzo II. The Duke and the Princess of Florence, for this was the title borne by the girl, now fourteen years of age, left the city with a large following of servants, officials, and secretaries, preceded by men-at-arms, and escorted by a mounted guard. The young Princess as yet knew nothing of her fate, excepting that the Pope and Duke Alessandro were to have an interview at Leghorn; but her uncle, Filippo Strozzi, soon told her of the future that lay before her.

Filippo Strozzi had married Clarissa de' Medici, whole sister to Lorenzo de' Medici, Duke of Urbino, Catherine's father; but this union, arranged quite as much with a view to converting one of the stoutest champions of the popular cause to the support of Medici as to secure the recall of that then exiled family, never shook the tenets of the rough soldier who was persecuted by his party for having consented to it. In spite of some superficial change of conduct, somewhat overruled by this alliance, he remained faithful to the popular side, and declared against the Medici as soon as he perceived their scheme of subjugating Florence. This great man even refused the offer of a principality from Leo X. At that time Filippo Strozzi was a victim to the policy of the Medici, so shifty in its means, so unvarying in its aim.

After sharing the Pope's misfortunes and captivity, when, surprised by Colonna, he took refuge in the castle of Saint-Angelo, he was given up by Clement VII. as a hostage and carried to Naples. As soon as the Pope was free, he fell upon his foes, and Strozzi was then near being killed; he was forced to pay an enormous bribe to get out of the prison, where he was closely guarded. As soon as he was at liberty, with the natural trustfulness of an honest man, he was

simple enough to appear before Clement VII., who perhaps had flattered himself that he was rid of him. The Pope had so much to be ashamed of that he received Strozzi very ungraciously. Thus Strozzi had very early begun his apprenticeship to the life of disaster, which is that of a man who is honest in politics, and whose conscience will not lend itself to the caprices of opportunity, whose actions are pleasing only to virtue, which is persecuted by all—by the populace, because it withstands their blind passions; by authority, because it resists its usurpations.

The life of these great citizens is a martyrdom, through which they have nothing to support them but the strong voice of conscience, and the sense of social duty, which in all cases dictates their conduct.

There were many such men in the Republic of Florence, all as great as Strozzi and as masterly as their adversaries on the Medici side, though beaten by Florentine cunning. In the conspiracy of the Pazzi, what can be finer than the attitude of the head of that house? His trade was immense, and he settled all his accounts with Asia, the Levant, and Europe before carrying out that great plot, to the end that his correspondents should not be the losers if he should fail.

And the history of the rise of the Medici family in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries is one of the finest that remains unwritten, though men of great genius have attempted it. It is not the history of a republic, or of any particular community or phase of civilization; it is the history of political man, and the eternal history of political developments, that of usurpers and conquerors.

On his return to Florence, Filippo Strozzi restored the ancient form of government, and banished Ippolito de' Medici, another bastard, as well as Alessandro, with whom he was now acting. But he then was afraid of the inconstancy of the populace; and as he dreaded Pope Clement's vengeance, he went to take charge of a large commercial house he had at Lyons in correspondence with his bankers at Venice and Rome, in France, and in Spain. A strange fact! These

men, who bore the burden of public affairs as well as that of a perennial struggle with the Medici, to say nothing of their squabbles with their own party, could also endure the cares of commerce and speculation, of banking with all its complications, which the vast multiplicity of coinages and frequent forgeries made far more difficult then than now. The word banker is derived from the bench on which they sat, and which served also to ring the gold and silver pieces on. Strozzi found in his adored wife's death a pretext to offer to the Republican party, whose police is always all the more terrible because everybody is a voluntary spy in the name of Liberty, which justifies all things.

Filippo's return to Florence happened just at the time when the city was compelled to bow to Alessandro's yoke; but he had previously been to see Pope Clement, with whom matters were so promising that his feelings towards Strozzi had changed. In the moment of triumph the Medici so badly needed such a man as Strozzi, were it only to lend a grace to Alessandro's assumption of dignity, that Clement persuaded him to sit on the bastard's council, which was about to take oppressive measures, and Filippo had accepted a diploma as senator. But for the last two years and a half—like Seneca and Burrhus with Nero—he had noted the beginnings of tyranny. He found himself the object of distrust to the populace, and so little in favor with the Medici, whom he opposed, that he foresaw a catastrophe. And as soon as he heard from Alessandro of the negotiations for the marriage of Catherine with a French Prince, which were perhaps to be concluded at Leghorn, where the contracting powers had agreed to meet, he resolved to go to France and follow the fortunes of his niece, who would need a guardian. Alessandro, delighted to be quit of a man so difficult to manage in what concerned Florence, applauded this decision, which spared him a murder, and advised Strozzi to place himself at the head of Catherine's household.

In point of fact, to dazzle the French Court, the Medici had constituted a brilliant suite for the young girl whom

they quite incorrectly styled the Princess of Florence, and who was also called the Duchess of Urbino. The procession, at the head of it Duke Alessandro, Catherine, and Strozzi, consisted of more than a thousand persons, exclusive of the escort and serving-men; and when the last of them were still at the gate of Florence, the foremost had already got beyond the first village outside the town—where straw plait for hats is now made.

It was beginning to be generally known that Catherine was to marry a son of Francis the First, but as yet it was no more than a rumor which found confirmation in the country from this triumphant progress from Florence to Leghorn. From the preparations required, Catherine suspected that her marriage was in question, and her uncle revealed to her the abortive scheme of her ambitious family, who had aspired to the hand of the Dauphin. Duke Alessandro still hoped that the Duke of Albany might succeed in changing the determination of the French King, who, though anxious to secure the aid of the Medici in Italy, would only give them the Duc d'Orléans. This narrowness lost Italy to France, and did not hinder Catherine from being Queen.

This Duke of Albany, the son of Alexander Stuart, brother of James III. of Scotland, had married Anne de la Tour de Boulogne, sister to Madeleine, Catherine's mother; he was thus her maternal uncle. It was through her mother that Catherine was so rich and connected with so many families; for, strangely enough, Diane de Poitiers, her rival, was also her cousin. Jean de Poitiers, Diane's father, was son of Jeanne de la Tour de Boulogne, the Duchess of Urbino's aunt. Catherine was also related to Mary Stuart, her daughter-in-law.

Catherine was now informed that her dower in money would amount to a hundred thousand ducats. The ducat was a gold piece as large as one of our old louis d'or, but only half as thick. Thus a hundred thousand ducats in those days represented, in consequence of the high value of gold,

six millions of francs at the present time, the ducat being worth about twelve francs. The importance of the banking-house of Strozzi, at Lyons, may be imagined from this, as it was his factor there who paid over the twelve hundred thousand livres in gold. The counties of Auvergne and Lauraguais also formed part of Catherine's portion, and the Pope Clement VII. made her a gift of a hundred thousand ducats more in jewels, precious stones, and other wedding gifts, to which Duke Alessandro contributed.

On reaching Leghorn, Catherine, still so young, must have been flattered by the extraordinary magnificence displayed by Pope Clement VII., her "uncle in Our Lady," then the head of the House of Medici, to crush the Court of France. He had arrived at the port in one of his galleys hung with crimson satin trimmed with gold fringe, and covered with an awning of cloth of gold. This barge, of which the decorations had cost nearly twenty thousand ducats, contained several rooms for the use of Henri de France's future bride, furnished with the choicest curiosities the Medici had been able to collect. The oarsmen, magnificently dressed, and the seamen were under the captaincy of a Prior of the Order of the Knights of Rhodes. The Pope's household filled three more barges.

The Duke of Albany's galleys, moored by the side of the Pope's, formed, with these, a considerable flotilla.

Duke Alessandro presented the officers of Catherine's household to the Pope, with whom he held a secret conference, introducing to him, as seems probable, Count Sebastian Montecuculi, who had just left the Emperor's service—rather suddenly, it was said—and the two Generals, Antonio de Leyva and Fernando Gonzaga. Was there a premeditated plan between these two bastards to make the Duc d'Orléans the Dauphin? What was the reward promised to Count Sebastian Montecuculi, who, before entering the service of Charles V., had studied medicine? History is silent on these points. We shall see indeed in what obscurity the subject is wrapped. It is so great that some serious and conscientious historians have recently recognized Montecuculi's innocence.

Catherine was now officially informed by the Pope himself of the alliance proposed for her. The Duke of Albany had had great difficulty in keeping the King of France to his promise of giving even his second son to Catherine de' Medici; and Clement's impatience was so great, he was so much afraid of seeing his schemes upset either by some intrigue on the part of the Emperor, or by the haughtiness of France, where the great nobles cast an evil eye on this union, that he embarked forthwith and made for Marseilles. He arrived there at the end of October 1533.

In spite of his splendor, the House of the Medici was eclipsed by the sovereign of France. To show to what a pitch these great bankers carried their magnificence, the dozen pieces given by the Pope in the bride's wedding purse consisted of gold medals of inestimable historical interest, for they were at that time unique. But Francis I., who loved festivity and display, distinguished himself on this occasion. The wedding feasts for Henri de Valois and Catherine went on for thirty-four days. It is useless to repeat here details which may be read in every history of Provence and Marseilles as to this famous meeting between the Pope and the King of France, which was the occasion of a jest of the Duke of Albany's as to the duty of fasting; a retort recorded by Brantôme which vastly amused the Court, and shows the tone of manners at that time.

Though Henri de Valois was but three weeks older than Catherine, the Pope insisted on the immediate consummation of the marriage between these two children, so greatly did he dread the subterfuges of diplomacy and the trickery commonly practised at that period. Clement, indeed, anxious for proof, remained thirty-four days at Marseilles, in the hope, it is said, of some visible evidence in his young relation, who at fourteen was marriageable. And it was, no doubt, when questioning Catherine before his departure, that he tried to console her by the famous speech ascribed to Catherine's father: *"A figlia d'inganno, non manca mai lo figliuolanza."*

The strangest conjectures have been given to the world as to the causes of Catherine's barrenness during ten years. Few persons nowadays are aware that various medical works contain suppositions as to this matter, so grossly indecent that they could not be repeated.* This gives some clue to the strange calumnies which still blacken this Queen, whose every action was distorted to her injury. The reason lay simply with her husband. It is sufficient evidence that at a time when no prince was shy of having natural children, Diane de Poitiers, far more highly favored than his wife, had no children; and nothing is commoner in surgical experience than such a malformation as this Prince's, which gave rise to a jest of the ladies of the Court, who would have made him Abbé de Saint-Victor, at a time when the French language was as free as the Latin tongue. After the Prince was operated on, Catherine had ten children.

The delay was a happy thing for France. If Henri II. had had children by Diane de Poitiers, it would have caused serious political complications. At the time of his treatment, the Duchesse de Valentinois was in the second youth of womanhood. These facts alone show that the history of Catherine de' Medici remains to be entirely re-written; and that, as Napoleon very shrewdly remarked, the history of France should be in one volume only, or in a thousand.

When we compare the conduct of Charles V. with that of the King of France during the Pope's stay at Marseilles, it is greatly to the advantage of Francis—as indeed in every instance. Here is a brief report of this meeting as given by a contemporary:—

"His Holiness the Pope, having been conducted to the Palace prepared for him, as I have said, outside the port, each one withdrew to his chamber until the morrow, when his said Holiness prepared to make his entry. Which was done with great sumptuousness and magnificence, he being set on a throne borne on the shoulders of two men in his pontifical habit, saving only the tiara, while before him went

*See *Bayle. Art. Fernel.*

a white palfry bearing the Holy Sacrament, the said palfrey being led by two men on foot in very fine raiment holding a bridle of white silk. After him came all the cardinals in their habit, riding their pontifical mules, and Madame the Duchess of Urbino in great magnificence, with a goodly company of ladies and gentlemen alike of France and of Italy. And the Pope, with all this company, being come to the place prepared where they should lodge, each one withdrew; and all this was ordered and done without any disorder or tumult. Now, while as the Pope was making his entry, the King crossed the water in his frigate and went to lodge there whence the Pope had come, to the end that on the morrow he might come from thence to pay homage to the Holy Father, as beseemed a most Christian King.

"The King being then ready, set forth to go to the Palace where the Pope was, accompanied by the Princes of his blood, Monseigneur the Duc de Vendosmois (father of the Vidame de Chartres), the Comte de Saint-Pol, Monsieur de Montmorency, and Monsieur de la Roche-sur-Yon, the Duc de Nemours (brother to the Duke of Savoy who died at that place), the Duke of Albany, and many others, counts, barons, and nobles, the Duc de Montmorency being at all times about the King's person. The King, being come to the Palace, was received by the Pope and all the College of Cardinals assembled in consistory, with much civility (*fort humainement*). This done, each one went to the place appointed to him, and the King took with him many cardinals to feast them, and among them Cardinal de' Medici, the Pope's nephew, a very magnificent lord with a fine escort. On the morrow, those deputed by his Holiness and by the King began to treat of those matters whereon they had met to agree. First of all, they treated of the question of faith, and a bull was read for the repression of heresy, and to hinder things from coming to a greater combustion (*une plus grande combustion*) than they are in already. Then was performed the marriage ceremony between the Duc d'Orléans, the King's second son, and Catherine de' Medici, Duchess of Urbino,

his Holiness' niece, under conditions the same, or nearly the same, as had been formerly proposed to the Duke of Albany. The said marriage was concluded with great magnificence, and our Holy Father married them.* This marriage being thus concluded, the Holy Father held a consistory, wherein he created four cardinals to wait on the King, to wit: Cardinal le Veneur, heretofore Bishop of Lisieux and High Almoner; Cardinal de Boulogne, of the family of la Chambre half-brother on his mother's side to the Duke of Albany Cardinal de Châtillon of the family of Coligny, nephew to the Sire de Montmorency; and Cardinal de Givry."

When Strozzi paid down the marriage portion in the presence of the Court, he observed some surprise on the part of the French nobles; they said pretty loudly that it was a small price for such a mésalliance—what would they say to-day? Cardinal Ippolito replied:

"Then you are not informed as to your King's secrets. His Holiness consents to bestow on France three pearls of inestimable price—Genoa, Milan, and Naples."

The Pope left Count Sebastian Montecuculi to present himself at the French Court, where he made an offer of his services, complaining of Antonio de Leyva and Fernando Gonzaga, for which reason he was accepted. Montecuculi was not one of Catherine's household, which was composed entirely of French ladies and gentlemen; for, by a law of the realm which the Pope was rejoiced to see carried out, Catherine was naturalized by letters patent before her marriage. Montecuculi was at first attached to the household of the Queen, Charles V.'s sister. Then, not long after, he entered the Dauphin's service in the capacity of cupbearer.

The Duchesse d'Orléans found herself entirely swamped at the Court of Francis I. Her young husband was in love with Diane de Poitiers, who was certainly her equal in point of birth, and a far greater lady. The daughter of the Medici

*At that time in French, as in Italian, the words *marry* and *espouse* were used in a contrary sense to their present meaning. *Marier* was the fact of being married. *épouser* was the priestly function.

took rank below Queen Eleanor, Charles V.'s sister, and the Duchesse d'Etampes, whose marriage to the head of the family of de Brosse had given her one of the most powerful positions and highest titles in France. Her aunt, the Duchess of Albany, the Queen of Navarre, the Duchesse de Guise, the Duchesse de Vendôme, the wife of the Connétable, and many other women, by their birth and privileges as well as by their influence in the most sumptuous Court ever held by a French King—not excepting Louis XIV.—wholly eclipsed the daughter of the Florentine merchants, who was indeed more illustrious and richer through the Tour de Boulogne family than through her descent from the Medici.

Filippo Strozzi, a republican at heart, regarded his niece's position as so critical and difficult, that he felt himself incapable of directing her in the midst of conflicting interests, and deserted her at the end of a year, being indeed recalled to Italy by the death of Clement VII. Catherine's conduct, when we remember that she was but just fifteen, was a marvel of prudence. She very adroitly attached herself to the King, her father-in-law, leaving him as rarely as possible; she was with him on horseback, in hunting, and in war.

Her adoration of Francis I. saved the House of Medici from all suspicion when the Dauphin died poisoned. At that time Catherine and the Duc d'Orléans were at the King's headquarters in Provence, for France had already been invaded by Charles V., the King's brother-in-law. The whole Court had remained on the scene of the wedding festivities, now the theatre of the most barbarous war. Just as Charles V., compelled to retreat, had fled, leaving the bones of his army in Provence, the Dauphin was returning to Lyons by the Rhone. Stopping at Tournon for the night, to amuse himself, he went through some athletic exercises, such as formed almost the sole education he or his brother received in consequence of their long detention as hostages. The Prince being very hot—it was in the month of August—was so rash as to ask for a glass of water, which was given to him, iced, by Montecuculi. The Dauphin died almost instantaneously.

The King idolized his son. The Dauphin was indeed, as historians are agreed, a very accomplished Prince. His father, in despair, gave the utmost publicity to the proceedings against Montecuculi, and placed the matter in the hands of the most learned judges of the day.

After heroically enduring the first tests of torture without confessing anything, the Count made an avowal by which he fully implicated the Emperor and his two generals, Antonio de Leyva and Fernando Gonzaga. This, however, did not satisfy Francis I. Never was a case more solemnly thrashed out than this. An eye-witness gives the following account of what the King did:—

"The King called all the Princes of the Blood, and all the Knights of his Order, and many other high personages of the realm, to meet at Lyons; the Pope's Legate and Nuncio, the cardinals who were of his Court, and the ambassadors of England, Scotland, Portugal, Venice, Ferrara, and others; together with all the princes and great nobles of foreign countries, both of Italy and of Germany, who were at that time residing at his Court, to-wit: The Duke of Wittemberg, in Allemaigne; the Dukes of Somma, of Arianna, and of Atria; the Princes of Melphe [Malfi?] (who had desired to marry Catherine), and of Stilliano, Neapolitan; the Marquis di Vigevo, of the House of Trivulzio, Milanese; the Signor Giovanni Paolo di Ceri, Roman; the Signor Césare Fregose, Genoese; the Signor Annibale Gonzaga, Mantuan, and many more. Who being assembled, he caused to be read in their presence, from the beginning to the end, the trial of that wretched man who had poisoned his late Highness the Dauphin, with all the interrogations, confessions, confrontings, and other proceedings usual in criminal trials, not choosing that the sentence should be carried out until all those present had given their opinion on this monstrous and miserable matter."

Count Montecuculi's fidelity and devotion may seem extraordinary in our day of universal indiscretion, when everybody, and even Ministers, talk over the most trivial incidents

in which they have put a finger; but in those times princes could command devoted servants, or knew how to choose them. There were monarchical Moreys then, because there was faith. Never look for great things from self-interest: interests may change; but look for anything from feeling, from religious faith, monarchical faith, patriotic faith. These three beliefs alone can produce a Berthereau of Geneva, a Sydney or a Strafford in England, assassins to murder Thomas à Becket, or a Montecuculi; Jacques Cœur and Jeanne d'Arc, or Richelieu and Danton; a Bonchamp, a Talmont, or a Clément, a Chabot.

Charles V. made use of the highest personages to carry out the murder of three ambassadors from Francis I. A year later Lorenzino, Catherine's cousin, assassinated Duke Alessandro after three years of dissimulation, and in circumstances which gained him the surname of the Florentine Brutus. The rank of the victim was so little a check on such undertakings that neither Leo X. nor Clement VII. seems to have died a natural death. Mariana, the historian of Philip II., almost jests in speaking of the death of the Queen of Spain, a Princess of France, saying that "for the greater glory of the Spanish throne God suffered the blindness of the doctors who treated the Queen for dropsy." When King Henri II. allowed himself to utter a scandal which deserved a sword-thrust, he could find la Châtaignerie willing to take it. At that time royal personages had their meals served to them in padlocked boxes of which they had the key. Hence the *droit de cadenas,* the *right of the padlock,* an honor which ceased to exist in the reign of Louis XIV.

The Dauphin died of poison, the same perhaps as caused the death of Madame, under Louis XIV. Pope Clement had been dead two years; Duke Alessandro, steeped in debauchery, seemed to have no interest in the Duc d'Orléans' elevation. Catherine, now seventeen years old, was with her father-in-law, whom she devotedly admired; Charles V. alone seemed to have an interest in the Dauphin's death, because Francis I. intended his son to form an alliance which

would have extended the power of France. Thus the Count's confession was very ingeniously based on the passions and policy of the day. Charles V. had fled after seeing his troops overwhelmed in Provence, and with them his good fortune, his reputation, and his hopes of aggrandizement. And note, that even if an innocent man had confessed under torture, the King afterwards gave him freedom of speech before an august assembly, and in the presence of men with whom innocence had a fair chance of a hearing. The King wanted the truth, and sought it in good faith.

In spite of her now brilliant prospects, Catherine's position at court was unchanged by the Dauphin's death; her childlessness made a divorce seem probable when her husband should become king. The Dauphin was now enslaved by Diane de Poitiers, who had dared to be the rival of Madame d'Etampes. Catherine was therefore doubly attentive and insinuating to her father-in-law, understanding that he was her sole mainstay.

Thus the first ten years of Catherine's married life were spent in the unceasing regrets caused by repeated disappointments when she hoped to have a child, and the vexations of her rivalry with Diane. Imagine what the life must be of a princess constantly spied on by a jealous mistress who was favored by the Catholic party, and by the strong support the Sénéchale had acquired through the marriage of her daughters—one to Robert de la Mark, Duc de Bouillon, Prince de Sédan; the other to Claude de Lorraine, Duc d'Aumale.

Swamped between the party of the Duchesse d'Etampes and that of the Sénéchale (the title borne by Diane de Poitiers during the reign of Francis I.), who divided the Court and political feeling between the two mortal foes, Catherine tried to be the friend of both the Duchess and Diane de Poitiers. She, who was to become so great a queen, played the part of a subaltern. Thus she served her apprenticeship to the double-faced policy which afterwards was the secret clue to her life. At a later date the queen found

herself between the Catholics and the Calvinists, as the woman had been, for ten years, between Madame d'Etampes and Madame de Poitiers.

She studied the contradictions of French policy. Francis upheld Calvin and the Lutherans, to annoy Charles V. Then, after having covertly and patiently fostered the Reformation in Germany, after tolerating Calvin's presence at the Court of Navarre, he turned against it with undisguised severity. So Catherine could see the Court and the women of the Court playing with the fire of heresy; Diane at the head of the Catholic party with the Guises, only because the Duchesse d'Etampes was on the side of Calvin and the Protestants.

This was Catherine's political education; and in the King's private circle she could study the mistakes made by the Medici. The Dauphin was antagonistic to his father on every point; he was a bad son. He forgot the hardest but the truest axiom of Royalty, namely, that the throne is a responsible entity, and that a son who may oppose his father during his lifetime must carry out his policy on succeeding to the throne. Spinoza, who was as deep a politician as he was a great philosopher, says, in treating of the case of a king who has succeeded to another by a revolution or by treason: "If the new King hopes to secure his throne and protect his life, he must display so much zeal in avenging his predecessor's death that no one shall feel tempted to repeat such a crime. But to avenge him worthily it is not enough that he should shed the blood of his subjects; he must confirm the maxims of him whose place he fills, and walk in the same ways of government."

It was the application of this principle which gave the Medici to Florence. Cosmo I., Alessandro's successor, eleven years later instigated the murder, at Venice, of the Florentine Brutus, and, as has been said, persecuted the Strozzi without mercy. It was the neglect of this principle that overthrew Louis XVI. That King was false to every principle of government when he reinstated the Parlements suppressed by his grandfather. Louis XV. had been clear-sighted; the

Parlements, and especially that of Paris, were quite half to blame for the disorders that necessitated the assembling of the States-General. Louis XV.'s mistake was that when he threw down that barrier between the throne and the people, he did not erect a stronger one, that he did not substitute for the Parlements a strong constitutional rule in the provinces. There lay the remedy for the evils of the Monarchy, the voting power for taxation and the incidence of the taxes, with consent gradually won to the reforms needed in the monarchical rule.

Henri II.'s first act was to give all his confidence to the Connétable de Montmorency, whom his father had desired him to leave in banishment. The Connétable de Montmorency, with Diane de Poitiers, to whom he was closely attached, was master of the kingdom. Hence Catherine was even less powerful and happy as Queen of France than she had been as the Dauphiness.

At first, from the year 1543, she had a child every year for ten years, and was fully taken up by her maternal functions during that time, which included the last years of Francis I.'s reign, and almost the whole of her husband's. It is impossible not to detect in this constant child-bearing the malicious influence of a rival who thus kept the legitimate wife out of the way. This feminine and barbarous policy was no doubt one of Catherine's grievances against Diane. Being thus kept out of the tide of affairs, this clever woman spent her time in observing all the interests of the persons at Court, and all the parties formed there. The Italians who had followed her excited violent suspicions. After the execution of Montecuculi, the Connétable de Montmorency, Diane, and most of the crafty politicians at Court were racked with doubts of the Medici; but Francis I. always scouted them. Still the Gondi, the Biraguas, the Strozzi, the Ruggieri, the Sardini, in short, all who were classed as the Italians who had arrived in Catherine's wake, were compelled to exercise every faculty of wit, policy, and courage to enable

them to remain at Court under the burden of disfavor that weighed on them. During the supremacy of Diane de Poitiers, Catherine's obligingness went so far that some clever folks have seen in it an evidence of the profound dissimulation to which she was compelled by men and circumstances, and by the conduct of Henri II. But it is going too far to say that she never asserted her rights as a wife and a queen. Her ten children (besides one miscarriage) were a sufficient explanation of the King's conduct, who was thus set free to spend his time with Diane de Poitiers. But the King certainly never fell short of what he owed to himself; he gave the Queen an entry worthy of any that had previously taken place, on the occasion of her coronation. The records of the *Parlement* and of the Exchequer prove that these two important bodies went to meet Catherine outside Paris, as far as Saint-Lazare. Here, indeed, is a passage from du Tillet's narrative:—

"A scaffolding had been erected at Saint-Lazare, whereon was a throne (which du Tillet calls a chair of state, *chaire de parement*). Catherine seated herself on this, dressed in a surcoat, or sort of cape of ermine, covered with jewels; beneath it a bodice, with a court train, and on her head a crown of pearls and diamonds; she was supported by the Maréchale de la Mark, her lady of honor. Around her, standing, were the princes of the Blood and other princes and noblemen richly dressed, with the Chancellor of France in a robe of cloth of gold in a pattern on a ground of red cramoisy.* In front of the Queen and on the same scaffolding were seated, in two rows, twelve duchesses and countesses, dressed in surcoats of ermine, stomachers, trains, and fillets, that is to say, coronets, whether duchesses or countesses. There were the Duchesse d'Estouteville, de Montpensier—the elder and the younger—the Princesse de la Roche-sur-Yon; the Duchesses de Guise, de Nivernois, d'Aumale, de Valentinois (Diane de Poitiers); Mademoiselle the legiti-

* The old French word *cramoisi* did not mean merely a crimson red, but denoted a special excellence of the dye. (See Rabelais.)

mized bastard 'of France' (a title given to the King's daughter Diane, who became Duchesse de Castro-Farnese, and afterwards Duchesse de Montmorency-Damville), Madame la Connétable, and Mademoiselle de Nemours, not to mention the other ladies who could find no room. The four *capped* Presidents (*à mortier*), with some other members of the Court and the chief clerk, du Tillet, went up on to the platform and did their service, and the First President Lizet, kneeling on one knee, addressed the Queen. The Chancellor, likewise on one knee, made response. She made her entrance into Paris at about three in the afternoon, riding in an open litter, Madame Marguerite de France sitting opposite to her, and by the side of the litter came the Cardinals d'Amboise, de Châtillon, de Boulogne, and de Lenoncourt, in their rochets. She got out at the Church of Notre-Dame, and was received by the clergy. After she had made her prayer, she was carried along the Rue de la Calandre to the Palace, where the royal supper was spread in the great hall. She sat there in the middle at a marble table, under a canopy of velvet powdered with gold fleurs de lys."

It will here be fitting to controvert a popular error which some persons have perpetuated, following Sauval in the mistake. It has been said that Henri II. carried his oblivion of decency so far as to place his mistress' initials even on the buildings which Catherine had advised him to undertake or to carry on at such lavish expense. But the cipher, which is to be seen at the Louvre, amply refutes those who have so little comprehension as to lend credit to such nonsense, a gratuitous slur on the honor of our kings and queens. The H for Henri and the two C's, face to face, for Catherine seem indeed to make two D's for Diane; and this coincidence was no doubt pleasing to the King. But it is not the less certain that the royal cipher was officially constructed of the initials of the King and the Queen. And this is so true, that the same cipher is still to be seen on the corn-market in Paris which Catherine herself had built. It may also be found in the crypt of Saint-Denis on Catherine's tomb, which she

caused to be constructed during her lifetime by the side of that of Henri II., and on which she is represented from life by the sculptor to whom she sat.

On a solemn occasion, when he was setting out on an expedition to Germany, Henri II. proclaimed Catherine Regent during his absence, as also in the event of his death—on March 25, 1552. Catherine's bitterest enemy, the author of the *Discours merveilleux sur les déportements de Catherine II.*, admits that she acquitted herself of these functions to the general approbation, and that the King was satisfied with her administration. Henri II. had men and money at the right moment. And after the disastrous day of Saint-Quentin, Catherine obtained from the Parisians considerable sums, which she forwarded to Compiègne, whither the King had come.

In politics Catherine made immense efforts to acquire some little influence. She was clever enough to gain over to her interests the Connétable de Montmorency, who was all-powerful under Henri II. The King's terrible reply to Montmorency's insistency is well known. This answer was the result of the good advice given by Catherine in the rare moments when she was alone with the King, and could explain to him the policy of the Florentines, which was to set the magnates of a kingdom by the ears and build up the sovereign authority on the ruins—Louis XI.'s system, subsequently carried out by Richelieu. Henri II., who saw only through the eyes of Diane and the Connétable, was quite a feudal King, and on friendly terms with the great Houses of the realm.

After an ineffectual effort in her favor made by the Connétable, probably in the year 1556, Catherine paid great court to the Guises, and schemed to detach them from Diane's party so as to set them in opposition to Montmorency. But, unfortunately, Diane and the Connétable were as virulent against the Protestants as the Guises were. Hence their antagonism lacked the virus which religious feeling would have given it. Besides, Diane boldly defied the Queen's plans

by coquetting with the Guises and giving her daughter to the Duc d'Aumale. She went so far that she has been accused by some writers of granting more than smiles to the gallant Cardinal de Lorraine.*

The signs of grief and the ostentatious regret displayed by Catherine on the King's death cannot be regarded as genuine. The fact that Henri II. had been so passionately and faithfully attached to Diane de Poitiers made it incumbent on Catherine that she should play the part of a neglected wife who idolized her husband; but, like every clever woman, she carried on her dissimulation, and never ceased to speak with tender regret of Henri II. Diane herself, it is well known, wore mourning all her life for her husband, Monsieur de Brézé. Her colors were black and white, and the King was wearing them at the tournament when he was fatally wounded. Catherine, in imitation no doubt of her rival, wore mourning for the King to the end of her life.

On the King's death, the Duchesse de Valentinois was shamelessly deserted and dishonored by the Connétable de Montmorency, a man in every respect beneath his reputation. Diane sent to offer her estate and Château of Chenonceaux to the Queen. Catherine then replied in the presence of witnesses, "I can never forget that she was all the joy of my dear Henri; I should be ashamed to accept, I will give her an estate in exchange. I would propose that of Chaumont-on-the-Loire." The deed of exchange was, in fact, signed at Blois in 1559. Diane, whose sons-in-law were the Duc d'Aumale and the Duc de Bouillon, kept her whole fortune and died peacefully in 1566 at the age of sixty-six. She was thus nineteen years older than Henri II. These dates, copied from the epitaph on her tomb by an historian who

*Some satirist of the time has left the following lines on Henri II. [in which the pun on the words Sire and Cire (wax) would be lost in translation]:—

"Sire, si vous laissez, comme Charles désire,
Comme Diane veut, par trop vous gouverner,
Fondre, pétrir, mollir, refondre, retourner,
Sire, vous n'êtes plus, vous n'êtes plus que cire."

Charles was the Cardinal de Lorraine.

studied the question at the end of the last century, clear up many historical difficulties; for many writers have said she was forty when her father was sentenced in 1523, while others have said she was but sixteen. She was, in fact, four-and-twenty.

After reading everything both for and against her conduct with Francis I., at a time when the House of Poitiers was in the greatest danger, we can neither confirm nor deny anything. It is a passage of history that still remains obscure. We can see by what happens in our own day how history is falsified, as it were, in the making.

Catherine, who founded great hopes on her rival's age, several times made an attempt to overthrow her. On one occasion she was very near the accomplishment of her hopes. In 1554, Madame Diane, being ill, begged the King to go to Saint-Germain pending her recovery. This sovereign coquette would not be seen in the midst of the paraphernalia of doctors, nor bereft of the adjuncts of dress. To receive the King on his return, Catherine arranged a splendid *ballet,* in which five or six young ladies were to address him in verse. She selected for the purpose Miss Fleming, related to her uncle, the Duke of Albany, and one of the loveliest girls imaginable, fair and golden-haired; then a young connection of her own, Clarissa Strozzi, with magnificent black hair and rarely fine hands; Miss Lewiston, maid of honor to Mary Stuart; Mary Stuart herself; Madame Elizabeth de France, the unhappy Queen of Spain; and Madame Claude. Elizabeth was nine years old, Claude eight, and Mary Stuart twelve. Obviously, the Queen aimed at showing off Clarissa Strozzi and Miss Fleming without other rivals in the King's eyes. The King succumbed: he fell in love with Miss Fleming, and she bore him a son, Henri de Valois, Comte d'Angoulême, Grand Prior of France.

But Diane's influence and position remained unshaken. Like Madame de Pompadour later with Louis XV., the Duchesse de Valentinois was forgiving. But to what sort of love are we to ascribe this scheme on Catherine's part? Love of power or love of her husband? Women must decide.

A great deal is said in these days as to the license of the press; but it is difficult to imagine to what a pitch it was carried when printing was a new thing. Aretino, the Voltaire of his time, as is well known, made monarchs tremble, and foremost of them all Charles V. But few people know perhaps how far the audacity of pamphleteers could go. This Château of Chenonceaux had been given to Diane, nay, she was entreated to accept it, to induce her to overlook one of the most horrible publications ever hurled at a woman, one which shows how violent was the animosity between her and Madame d'Etampes. In 1537, when she was eight-and-thirty, a poet of Champagne, named Jean Voûté, published a collection of Latin verses, and among them three epigrams aimed at her. We must conclude that the poet was under high patronage from the fact that his volume is introduced by an *eulogium* written by Simon Macrin, the King's First Gentleman of the Bed-chamber. Here is the only passage quotable to-day from these epigrams, which bear the title: *In Pictaviam, anum aulicam.* (Against *la Poitiers,* an old woman of the Court.)

"Non trahit esca ficta prædam."

"A painted bait catches no game," says the poet, after telling her that she paints her face and buys her teeth and hair; and he goes on: "Even if you could buy the finest essence that makes a woman, you would not get what you want of your lover, for you would need to be living, and you are dead."

This volume, printed by Simon de Colines, was dedicated "To a Bishop!"—To François Bohier, the brother of the man who, to save his credit at Court and atone for his crime, made an offering on the accession of Henri II. of the château of Chenonceaux, built by his father, Thomas Bohier, Councillor of State under four Kings: Louis XI., Charles VIII., Louis XII., and Francis I. What were the pamphlets published against Madame de Pompadour and Marie Antoinette

in comparison with verses that might have been written by Martial! Voûté must have come to a bad end. Thus the estate and château of Chenonceaux cost Diane nothing but the forgiveness of an offence—a duty enjoined by the Gospel. Not being assessed by a jury, the penalties inflicted on the Press were rather severer then than they are now.

The widowed Queens of France were required to remain for forty days in the King's bed-chamber, seeing no light but that of the tapers; they might not come out till after the funeral. This inviolable custom annoyed Catherine greatly; she was afraid of cabals. She found a way to evade it. The Cardinal de Lorraine coming out one morning—at such a time! at such a juncture!—from the house of "the fair Roman," a famous courtesan of that day, who lived in the Rue Culture-Sainte-Catherine, was roughly handled by a party of roisterers. "Whereat his Holiness was much amazed," says Henri Estienne, "and gave it out that heretics were lying in wait for him."—And on this account the Court moved from Paris to Saint-Germain. The Queen would not leave the King her son behind, but took him with her.

The accession of Francis II., the moment when Catherine proposed to seize the reins of power, was a disappointment that formed a cruel climax to the twenty-six years of endurance she had already spent at the French Court. The Guises, with incredible audacity, at once usurped the sovereign power. The Duc de Guise was placed in command of the army, and the Connétable de Montmorency was shelved. The Cardinal took the control of the finances and the clergy.

Catherine's political career opened with one of those dramas, which, though it was less notorious than some others, was not the less horrible, and initiated her no doubt into the agitating shocks of her life. Whether it was that Catherine, after vainly trying the most violent remedies, had thought she might bring the King back to her through jealousy; whether on coming to her second youth she had felt it hard never to have known love, she had shown a warm interest in a gentleman of royal blood, François de Vendôme, son of Louis

de Vendôme—the parent House of the Bourbons—the Vidame de Chartres, the name by which he is known to history. Catherine's covert hatred of Diane betrayed itself in many ways, which historians, studying only political developments, have failed to note with due attention. Catherine's attachment to the Vidame arose from an insult offered by the young man to the favorite. Diane looked for the most splendid matches for her daughters, who were indeed of the best blood in the kingdom. Above all, she was ambitious of an alliance with the Royal family. And her second daughter, who became the Duchesse d'Aumale, was proposed in marriage to the Vidame, whom Francis I., with sage policy, kept in poverty. For, in fact, when the Vidame de Chartres and the Prince de Condé first came to Court, Francis I. gave them appointments! What? the office of chamberlains in ordinary, with twelve hundred crowns a year, as much as he bestowed on the humblest of his gentlemen. And yet, though Diane offered him immense wealth, some high office under the Crown, and the King's personal favor, the Vidame refused. And then this Bourbon, factious as he was, married Jeanne, daughter of the Baron d'Estissac, by whom he had no children.

This proud demeanor naturally commended the Vidame to Catherine, who received him with marked favor, and made him her devoted friend. Historians have compared the last Duc de Montmorency, who was beheaded at Toulouse, with the Vidame de Chartres for his power of charming, his merits, and his talents.

Henri II. was not jealous; he did not apparently think it possible that a Queen of France could fail in her duty, or that a Medici could forget the honor done her by a Valois. When the Queen was said to be flirting with the Vidame de Chartres, she had been almost deserted by the King since the birth of her last child. So this attempt came to nothing —as the King died wearing the colors of Diane de Poitiers.

So, at the King's death, Catherine was on terms of gallant familiarity with the Vidame, a state of things in no way out

of harmony with the manners of the time, when love was at once so chivalrous and so licentious that the finest actions seemed as natural as the most blamable. But, as usual, historians have blundered by regarding exceptional cases as the rule.

Henri II.'s four sons nullified every pretension of the Bourbons, who were all miserably poor, and crushed under the scorn brought upon them by the Connétable de Montmorency's treason, in spite of the reasons which had led him to quit the country. The Vidame de Chartres, who was to the first Prince de Condé what Richelieu was to Mazarin, a father in politics, a model, and yet more a master in gallantry, hid the vast ambition of his family under a semblance of levity. Being unable to contend with the Guises, the Montmorencys, the Princes of Scotland, the Cardinals, and the Bouillons, he aimed at distinction by his gracious manners, his elegance, and his wit, which won him the favors of the most charming women, and the heart of many he never thought about. He was a man privileged by nature, whose fascinations were irresistible, and who owed to his love affairs the means of keeping up his rank. The Bourbons would not have taken offence, like Jarnac, at la Châtaignerie's scandal; they were very ready to accept lands and houses from their mistresses—witness the Prince de Condé, who had the estate of Saint-Valery from Madame la Maréchale de Saint-André.

During the first twenty days of mourning for Henri II., a sudden change came over the Vidame's prospects. Courted by the Queen-mother, and courting her as a man may court a queen, in the utmost secrecy, he seemed fated to play an important part; and Catherine, in fact, resolved to make him useful. The Prince received letters from her to the Prince de Condé, in which she pointed out the necessity for a coalition against the Guises. The Guises, informed of this intrigue, made their way into the Queen's chamber to compel her to sign an order consigning the Vidame to the Bastille, and Catherine found herself under the cruel necessity of

submitting. The Vidame died after a few months' captivity, on the day when he came out of prison, a short time before the Amboise conspiracy.

This was the end of Catherine de' Medici's first and only love affair. Protestant writers declared that the Queen had him poisoned to bury the secret of her gallantries in the tomb.

Such was this woman's apprenticeship to the exercise of royal power.

PART I

THE CALVINIST MARTYR

Few persons in these days know how artless were the dwellings of the citizens of Paris in the sixteenth century, and how simple their lives. This very simplicity of habits and thought perhaps was the cause of the greatness of this primitive citizen class—for they were certainly great, free and noble, more so perhaps than the citizens of our time. Their history remains to be written; it requires and awaits a man of genius. Inspired by an incident which, though little known, forms the basis of this narrative, and is one of the most remarkable in the history of the citizen class, this reflection will no doubt occur to every one who shall read it to the end. Is it the first time in history that the conclusion has come before the facts?

In 1560, the houses of the Rue de la Vieille-Pelleterie lay close to the left bank of the Seine, between the Pont Notre-Dame and the Pont au Change. The public way and the houses occupied the ground now given up to the single path of the present quay. Each house, rising from the river, had a way down to it by stone or wooden steps, defended by strong iron gates, or doors of nail-studded timber. These houses, like those of Venice, had a door to the land and one to the water. At the moment of writing this sketch, only one house remains of this kind as a reminiscence of old Paris, and that is doomed soon to disappear; it stands at the corner of the Petit-Pont, the little bridge facing the guard-house of the Hôtel-Dieu.

Of old each dwelling presented, on the river side, the

peculiar physiognomy stamped on it either by the trade and the habits of its owners, or by the eccentricity of the constructions devised by them for utilizing or defiling the Seine. The bridges being built, and almost all choked up by more mills than were convenient for the requirements of navigation, the Seine in Paris was divided into as many pools as there were bridges. Some of these old Paris basins would have afforded delightful studies of color for the painter. What a forest of timbers was built into the cross-beams that supported the mills, with their immense sails and wheels! What curious effects were to be found in the joists that shored up the houses from the river. Genre painting as yet, unfortunately, was not, and engraving in its infancy; so we have no record of the curious scenes which may still be found, on a small scale, in some provincial towns where the rivers are fringed with wooden houses, and where, as at Vendôme, for instance, the pools, overgrown with tall grasses, are divided by railings to separate the various properties on each bank.

The name of this street, which has now vanished from the map, sufficiently indicates the kind of business carried on there. At that time the merchants engaged in any particular trade, far from dispersing themselves about the city, gathered together for mutual protection. Being socially bound by the guild which limited their increase, they were also united into a brotherhood by the Church. This kept up prices. And then the masters were not at the mercy of their workmen, and did not yield, as they do now, to all their vagaries; on the contrary, they took charge of them, treated them as their children, and taught them the finer mysteries of their craft. A workman, to become a master, was required to produce a masterpiece—always an offering to the patron saint of the guild. And will you venture to assert that the absence of competition diminished their sense of perfection, or hindered beauty of workmanship, when your admiration of the work of the older craftsmen has created the new trade of dealers in *bric-à-brac?*

In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the fur trade was one of the most flourishing industries. The difficulty of obtaining furs, which, coming from the North, necessitated long and dangerous voyages, gave a high value to skins and furriers' work. Then, as now, high prices led to demand, for vanity knows no obstacles.

In France, and in other kingdoms, not only was the use of furs restricted by law to the great nobility, as is proved by the part played by ermine in ancient coats-of-arms; but certain rare furs, such as *vair,* which was beyond doubt imperial sable, might be worn only by kings, dukes, and men of high rank holding certain offices. *Vair* (a name still used in heraldry, *vair* and *counter vair*) was sub-divided into *grand vair* and *menu vair.* The word has within the last hundred years fallen so completely into disuse, that in hundreds of editions of Perrault's fairy tales, Cinderella's famous slipper, probably of fur, *menu vair,* has become a glass slipper, *pantoufle de verre.* Not long since a distinguished French poet was obliged to restore and explain the original spelling of this word, for the edification of his brethren of the press, when giving an account of the "Cenerentola," in which a ring is substituted for the symbolical slipper—an unmeaning change.

The laws against the use of fur were, of course, perpetually transgressed, to the great advantage of the furriers. The high price of textiles and of furs made a garment in those days a durable thing, in keeping with the furniture, armor, and general details of the sturdy life of the time. A nobleman or lady, every rich man as well as every citizen, possessed at most two dresses for each season, and they lasted a lifetime or more. These articles were bequeathed to their children. Indeed, the clauses relating to weapons and raiment in marriage contracts, in these days unimportant by reason of the small value of clothes that are constantly renewed, were at that period of great interest. High prices had led to durability.

A lady's outfit represented a vast sum of money; it was

included in her fortune, and safely bestowed in those enormous chests which endanger the ceilings of modern houses. The full dress of a lady in 1840 would have been the *déshabillé* of a fine lady of 1540. The discovery of America, the facility of transport, the destruction of social distinctions, which has led to the effacement of visible distinctions, have all contributed to reduce the furrier's craft to the low ebb at which it stands, almost to nothing. The article sold by a furrier at the same price as of old—say twenty livres—has fallen in value with the money: the livre or franc was then worth twenty of our present money. The citizen's wife or the courtesan who, in our day, trims her cloak with sable, does not know that in 1440 a malignant constable of the watch would have taken her forthwith into custody, and haled her before the judge at le Châtelet. The English ladies who are so fond of ermine are unconscious of the fact that formerly none but queens, duchesses, and the Chancellor of France were permitted to wear this royal fur. There are at this day various ennobled families bearing the name of Pelletier or Lepelletier, whose forebears were obviously wealthy furriers; for most of our citizen names were originally surnames of that kind.

This digression not only explains the long squabbles as to precedence which the Drapers' Guild carried on for two centuries with the Mercers and the Furriers, each insisting on marching first, as being the most important, but also accounts for the consequence of one Master Lecamus, a furrier honored with the patronage of the two Queens, Catherine de' Medici and Mary Stuart, as well as that of the legal profession, who for twenty years had been the Syndic of his Corporation, and who lived in this street. The house occupied by Lecamus was one of the three forming the three corners of the cross-roads at the end of the Pont au Change, where only the tower now remains that formed the fourth corner. At the angle of this house, forming the corner of the bridge and of the quay, now called the Quai aux Fleurs,

the architect had placed a niche for a Madonna, before whom tapers constantly burned, with posies of real flowers in their season, and artificial flowers in the winter.

On the side towards the Rue du Pont, as well as on that to the Rue de la Vieille-Pelleterie, the house was supported on wooden pillars. All the houses of the trading quarters were thus constructed, with an arcade beneath, where foot passengers walked under cover on a floor hardened by the mud they brought in, which made it a rather rough pavement. In all the towns of France these arcades have been called *piliers*—in England *rows*—a general term to which the name of a trade is commonly added, as "Piliers des Halles," "Piliers de la Boucherie." These covered ways, required by the changeable and rainy climate of Paris, gave the town a highly characteristic feature, but they have entirely disappeared. Just as there now remains one house only on the river-bank, so no more than about a hundred feet are left of the old *Piliers* in the market, the last that have survived till now; and in a few days this remnant of the gloomy labyrinth of old Paris will also be destroyed. The existence of these relics of the Middle Ages is, no doubt, incompatible with the splendor of modern Paris. And these remarks are not intended as a lament over those fragments of the old city, but as a verification of this picture by the last surviving examples now falling into dust, and to win forgiveness for such descriptions, which will be precious in the future which is following hard on the heels of this age.

The walls were of timber covered with slates. The spaces between the timbers had been filled up with bricks, in a way that may still be seen in some provincial towns, laid in a zigzag pattern known as *Point de Hongrie*. The window-sills and lintels, also of wood, were handsomely carved, as were the corner tabernacle above the Madonna, and the pillars in front of the shop. Every window, every beam dividing the stories, was graced with arabesques of fantastic figures and animals wreathed in scrolls of foliage. On the street side, as on the river side, the house was crowned with a high-

pitched roof having a gable to the river and one to the street. This roof, like that of a Swiss chalet, projected far enough to cover a balcony on the second floor, with an ornamental balustrade; here the mistress might walk under shelter and command a view of the street, or of the pool shut in between two bridges and two rows of houses.

Houses by the river were at that time highly valued. The system of drainage and water supply was not yet invented; the only main drain was one round Paris, constructed by Aubriot, the first man of genius and determination who—in the time of Charles V.—thought of sanitation for Paris. Houses situated like this of the Sieur Lecamus found in the river a necessary water-supply, and a natural outlet for rain water and waste. The vast works of this kind under the direction of the Trade Provosts are only now disappearing. None but octogenarians can still remember having seen the pits which swallowed up the surface waters, in the Rue Montmartre, Rue du Temple, etc. These hideous yawning culverts were in their day of inestimable utility. Their place will probably be for ever marked by the sudden rising of the roadway over what was their open channel—another archæological detail which, in a couple of centuries, the historian will find inexplicable.

One day, in 1816, a little girl, who had been sent to an actress at the Ambigu with some diamonds for the part of a queen, was caught in a storm, and so irresistibly swept away by the waters to the opening of the drain in the Rue du Temple, that she would have been drowned in it but for the help of a passer-by, who was touched by her cries. But she had dropped the jewels, which were found in a man-hole. This accident made a great commotion, and gave weight to the demands for the closing of these gulfs for swallowing water and little girls. These curious structures, five feet high, had more or less movable gratings, which led to the flooding of cellars when the stream produced by heavy rain was checked by the grating being choked with rubbish, which the residents often forgot to remove.

The front of Master Lecamus' shop was a large window, but filled in with small panes of leaded glass, which made the place very dark. The furs for wealthy purchasers were carried to them for inspection. To those who came to buy in the shop, the goods were displayed outside between the pillars, which, during the day, were always more or less blocked by tables and salesmen sitting on stools, as they could still be seen doing under the arcade of the Halles some fifteen years since. From these outposts the clerks, apprentices, and sewing girls could chat, question, and answer each other, and hail the passer-by in a way which Walter Scott has depicted in the *Fortunes of Nigel*. The signboard, representing an ermine, was hung out as we still see those of village inns, swinging from a handsome arm of pierced and gilt ironwork. Over the ermine were these words:

LECAMUS

Furrier

To Her Majesty the Queen and the King our Sovereign Lord

On one side, and on the other:

"To Her Majesty the Queen Mother
And to the Gentlemen of the Parlement."

The words "To Her Majesty the Queen" had been lately added; the gilt letters were new. This addition was a consequence of the recent changes produced by Henri II.'s sudden and violent death, which overthrew many fortunes at Court, and began that of the Guises.

The back shop looked over the river. In this room sat the worthy citizen and his wife, Mademoiselle Lecamus. The wife of a man who was not noble had not at any time any right to the title of Dame, or lady; but the wives of the citizens of Paris were allowed to call themselves Demoiselle

(as we might say Mistress), as part of the privileges granted and confirmed to their husbands by many kings to whom they had rendered great services. Between this back room and the front shop was a spiral ladder or staircase of wood, a sort of corkscrew leading up to the next story, where the furs were stored, to the old couple's bedroom, and again to the attics, lighted by dormer windows, where their children slept, the maid-servant, the clerks, and the apprentices.

This herding of families, servants, and apprentices, and the small space allotted to each in the dwelling, where the apprentices all slept in one large room under the tiles, accounts for the enormous population at that time crowded together in Paris on a tenth of the ground now occupied by the city, and also for the many curious details of mediæval life, and the cunning love affairs, though these, *pace* the grave historian, are nowhere recorded but by the story writers, and without them would have been lost.

At this time a grand gentleman—such as the Admiral de Coligny, for instance—had three rooms for himself in Paris, and his people lived in a neighboring hostelry. There were not fifty mansions in all Paris, not fifty palaces, that is to say, belonging to the sovereign princes or great vassals, whose existence was far superior to that of the greatest German rulers, such as the Duke of Bavaria or the Elector of Saxony.

The kitchen in the Lecamus' house was on the river side below the back shop. It had a glass door opening on to an ironwork balcony, where the cook could stand to draw up water in a pail and to wash the household linen. Thus the back shop was at once the sitting-room, the dining-room, and the counting-house. It was in this important room—always fitted with richly-carved wood, and adorned by some chest or artistic article of furniture—that the merchant spent most of his life; there he had jolly suppers after his day's work; there were held secret debates on the political interests of the citizens and the Royal family. The formidable guilds of Paris could at that time arm a hundred thousand men. Their resolutions were stoutly upheld by their serving-men,

their clerks, their apprentices, and their workmen. Their Provost was their commander-in-chief, and they had, in the Hôtel de Ville, a palace where they had a right to assemble.

In that famous "citizens' parlor" (*parlouer aux bourgeois*) very solemn decisions were taken. But for the continual sacrifices which had made war unendurable to the Guilds, wearied out with losses and famine, Henri IV., a rebel-made king, might never have entered Paris.

Every reader may now imagine for himself the characteristic appearance of this corner of Paris where the bridge and the Quay now open out, where the trees rise from the Quai aux Fleurs, and where nothing is left of the past but the lofty and famous clock-tower whence the signal was tolled for the Massacre of Saint-Bartholomew. Strange coincidence! One of the houses built round the foot of that tower —at that time surrounded by wooden shops—the house of the Lecamus, was to be the scene of one of the incidents that led to that night of horrors, which proved, unfortunately, propitious rather than fatal to Calvinism.

At the moment when this story begins, the audacity of the new religious teaching was setting Paris by the ears. A Scotchman, named Stuart, had just assassinated President Minard, that member of the Parlement to whom public opinion attributed a principal share in the execution of Anne du Bourg, a councillor burnt on the Place de Grève after the tailor of the late King, who had been tortured in the presence of Henri II. and Diane de Poitiers. Paris was so closely watched, that the archers on guard compelled every passer-by to pray to the Virgin, in order to detect heretics, who yielded unwillingly, or even refused to perform an act opposed to their convictions.

The two archers on guard at the corner of the Lecamus' house had just gone off duty; thus Christophe, the furrier's son, strongly suspected of deserting the Catholic faith, had been able to go out without fear of being compelled to adore the Virgin's image. At seven in the evening of an April day,

"I am Chaudieu!"

1560, night was falling, and the apprentices, seeing only a few persons walking along the arcades on each side of the street, were carrying in the goods laid out for inspection preparatory to closing the house and the shop. Christophe Lecamus, an ardent youth of two-and-twenty, was standing in the door, apparently engaged in looking after the apprentices.

"Monsieur," said one of these lads to Christophe, pointing out a man who was pacing to and fro under the arcade with a doubtful expression, "that is probably a spy or a thief, but whatever he is, such a lean wretch cannot be an honest man. If he wanted to speak to us on business, he would come up boldly instead of creeping up and down as he is doing.—And what a face!" he went on, mimicking the stranger, "with his nose hidden in his cloak! What a jaundiced eye, and what a starved complexion!"

As soon as the stranger thus described saw Christophe standing alone in the doorway, he hastily crossed from the opposite arcade where he was walking, came under the pillars of the Lecamus' house, and passing along by the shop before the apprentices had come out again to close the shutters, he went up to the young man.

"I am Chaudieu!" he said in a low voice.

On hearing the name of one of the most famous ministers, and one of the most heroic actors in the terrible drama called the Reformation, Christophe felt such a thrill as a faithful peasant would have felt on recognizing his King under a disguise.

"Would you like to see some furs?" said Christophe, to deceive the apprentices whom he heard behind him. "Though it is almost dark, I can show you some myself."

He invited the minister to enter, but the man replied that he would rather speak to him out of doors. Christophe fetched his cap and followed the Calvinist.

Chaudieu, though banished by an edict, as secret plenipotentiary of Théodore de Bèze and Calvin—who directed the Reformation in France from Geneva—went and came,

defying the risk of the horrible death inflicted by the Parlement, in concert with the Church and the Monarch, on a leading reformer, the famous Anne du Bourg. This man, whose brother was a captain in the army, and one of Admiral Coligny's best warriors, was the arm used by Calvin to stir up France at the beginning of the twenty-two years of religious wars which were on the eve of an outbreak. This preacher of the reformed faith was one of those secret wheels which may best explain the immense spread of the Reformation.

Chaudieu led Christophe down to the edge of the water by an underground passage like that of the Arche Marion, filled in some ten years since. This tunnel between the house of Lecamus and that next it ran under the Rue de la Vieille-Pelleterie, and was known as le Pont aux Fourreurs. It was used by the dyers of the Cité as a way down to the river to wash their thread, silk, and materials. A little boat lay there, held and rowed by one man. In the bows sat a stranger, a small man, and very simply dressed. In an instant the boat was in the middle of the river, and the boatman steered it under one of the wooden arches of the Pont au Change, where he quickly secured it to an iron ring. No one had said a word.

"Here we may talk in safety, there are neither spies nor traitors," said Chaudieu to the two others. "Are you filled with the spirit of self-sacrifice that should animate a martyr? Are you ready to suffer all things for our holy Cause? Do you fear the torments endured by the late King's tailor, and the Councillor du Bourg, which of a truth await us all?" He spoke to Christophe, looking at him with a radiant face.

"I will testify to the Gospel," replied Christophe simply, looking up at the windows of the back shop.

The familiar lamp standing on a table, where his father was no doubt balancing his books, reminded him by its mild beam of the peaceful life and family joys he was renouncing. It was a brief but complete vision. The young man's fancy took in the homely harmony of the whole scene—the placer

where he had spent his happy childhood, where Babette Lallier lived, his future wife, where everything promised him a calm and busy life; he saw the past, he saw the future, and he sacrificed it all. At any rate, he staked it.

Such were men in those days.

"We need say no more," cried the impetuous boatman. "We know him for one of the saints. If the Scotchman had not dealt the blow, he would have killed the infamous Minard."

"Yes," said Lecamus, "my life is in the hands of the brethren, and I devote it with joy for the success of the Reformation. I have thought of it all seriously. I know what we are doing for the joy of the nations. In two words, the Papacy makes for celibacy, the Reformation makes for the family. It is time to purge France of its monks, to restore their possessions to the Crown, which will sell them sooner or later to the middle classes. Let us show that we can die for our children, and to make our families free and happy!"

The young enthusiast's face, with Chaudieu's, the boatman's, and that of the stranger seated in the bows, formed a picture that deserves to be described, all the more so because such a description entails the whole history of that epoch, if it be true that it is given to some men to sum up in themselves the spirit of their age.

Religious reform, attempted in Germany by Luther, in Scotland by John Knox, and in France by Calvin, found partisans chiefly among those of the lower classes who had begun to think. The great nobles encouraged the movement only to serve other interests quite foreign to the religious question. These parties were joined by adventurers, by gentlemen who had lost all, by youngsters to whom every form of excitement was acceptable. But among the artisans and men employed in trade, faith was genuine, and founded on intelligent interests. The poorer nations at once gave their adherence to a religion which brought the property of the Church back to the State, which suppressed the convents,

and deprived the dignitaries of the Church of their enormous revenues. Everybody in trade calculated the profits from this religious transaction, and devoted themselves to it body, soul, and purse; and among the youth of the French citizen class, the new preaching met that noble disposition for self-sacrifice of every kind which animates the young to whom egoism is unknown.

Eminent men, penetrating minds, such as are always to be found among the masses, foresaw the Republic in the Reformation, and hoped to establish throughout Europe a form of government like that of the United Netherlands, which at last triumphed over the greatest power of the time—Spain, ruled by Philip II., and represented in the Low Countries by the Duke of Alva. Jean Hotoman was at that time planning the famous book in which this scheme is set forth, which diffused through France the leaven of these ideas, stirred up once more by the League, subdued by Richelieu, and afterwards by Louis XIV., to reappear with the Economists and the Encyclopedists under Louis XV., and burst into life under Louis XVI.; ideas which were always approved by the younger branches, by the House of Orléans in 1789, as by the House of Bourbon in 1589.

The questioning spirit is the rebellious spirit. A rebellion is always either a cloak to hide a prince, or the swaddling wrapper of a new rule. The House of Bourbon, a younger branch than the Valois, was busy at the bottom of the Reformation. At the moment when the little boat lay moored under the arch of the Pont au Change, the question was further complicated by the ambition of the Guises, the rivals of the Bourbons. Indeed, the Crown as represented by Catherine de' Medici could, for thirty years, hold its own in the strife by setting these two factions against each other; whereas later, instead of being clutched at by many hands, the Crown stood face to face with the people without a barrier between; for Richelieu and Louis XIV. had broken down the nobility, and Louis XV. had overthrown the Parlements. Now a king alone face to face with a nation, as Louis XVI. was, must inevitably succumb.

Christophe Lecamus was very typical of the ardent and devoted sons of the people. His pale complexion had that warm burnt hue which is seen in some fair people; his hair was of a coppery yellow; his eyes were bluish-gray, and sparkled brightly. In them alone was his noble soul visible, for his clumsy features did not disguise the somewhat triangular shape of a plain face by lending it the look of dignity which a man of rank can assume, and his forehead was low, and characteristic only of great energy. His vitality seemed to be seated no lower down than his chest, which was somewhat hollow. Sinewy, rather than muscular, Christophe was of tough texture, lean but wiry. His sharp nose showed homely cunning, and his countenance revealed intelligence of the kind that acts wisely on one point of a circle, but has not the power of commanding the whole circumference. His eyes, set under brows that projected like a penthouse, and faintly outlined with light down, were surrounded with broad light-blue circles, with a sheeny white patch at the root of the nose, almost always a sign of great excitability. Christophe was of the people—the race that fights and allows itself to be deceived; intelligent enough to understand and to serve an idea, too noble to take advantage of it, too magnanimous to sell himself.

By the side of old Lecamus' only son, Chaudieu, the ardent minister, lean from watchfulness, with brown hair, a yellow skin, a contumacious brow, an eloquent mouth, fiery hazel eyes, and a short rounded chin, symbolized that Christian zeal which gave the Reformation so many fanatical and earnest preachers, whose spirit and boldness fired whole communities. This aide-de-camp of Calvin and Théodore de Bèze contrasted well with the furrier's son. He represented the living cause of which Christophe was the effect. You could not have conceived of the active firebrand of the popular machine under any other aspect.

The boatman, an impetuous creature, tanned by the open air, the dews of night, and the heats of the day, with firmly set lips, quick motions, a hungry, tawny eye like a vulture's,

and crisp black hair, was the characteristic adventurer who risks his all in an undertaking as a gambler stakes his whole fortune on a card. Everything in the man spoke of terrible passions and a daring that would flinch at nothing. His quivering muscles were as able to keep silence as to speak. His look was assertive rather than noble. His nose, upturned but narrow, scented battle. He seemed active and adroit In any age you would have known him for a party leader He might have been Pizarro, Hernando Cortez, or Morgan the Destroyer if there had been no Reformation—a doer of violent deeds.

The stranger who sat on a seat, wrapped in his cloak, evidently belonged to the highest social rank. The fineness of his linen, the cut, material, and perfume of his raiment, the make and texture of his gloves, showed a man of the Court, as his attitude, his haughtiness, his cool demeanor, and his flashing eye revealed a man of war. His appearance was at first somewhat alarming, and inspired respect. We respect a man who respects himself. Though short and hunchbacked, his manner made good all the defects of his figure. The ice once broken, he had the cheerfulness of decisiveness and an indescribable spirit of energy which made him attractive. He had the blue eyes and the hooked nose of the House of Navarre, and the Spanish look of the marked physiognomy that was characteristic of the Bourbon kings.

With three words the scene became of the greatest interest.

"Well, then," said Chaudieu, as Christophe Lecamus made his profession of faith, "this boatman is la Renaudie; and this is Monseigneur the Prince de Condé," he added, turning to the hunchback.

Thus the four men were representative of the faith of the people, the intellect of eloquence, the arm of the soldier, and Royalty cast into the shade.

"You will hear what we require of you," the minister went on, after allowing a pause for the young man's astonishment. "To the end that you may make no mistakes, we are com-

pelled to initiate you into the most important secrets of the Reformation."

The Prince and la Renaudie assented by a gesture, when the minister ceased speaking, to allow the Prince to say something if he should wish it. Like all men of rank engaged in conspiracies, who make it a principle not to appear before some critical moment, the Prince kept silence. Not from cowardice: at such junctures he was the soul of the scheme, shrank from no danger, and risked his head; but with a sort of royal dignity, he left the explanation of the enterprise to the preacher, and was content to study the new instrument he was compelled to make use of.

"My son," said Chaudieu in Huguenot phraseology, "we are about to fight the first battle against the Roman whore. In a few days our soldiers must perish at the stake, or the Guises must be dead. So, ere long, the King and the two Queens will be in our power. This is the first appeal to arms by our religion in France, and France will not lay them down till she has conquered—it is of the nation that I speak, and not of the kingdom. Most of the nobles of the kingdom see what the Cardinal de Lorraine and the Duke his brother are driving at. Under pretence of defending the Catholic faith, the House of Lorraine claims the Crown of France as its inheritance. It leans on the Church, and has made it a formidable ally; the monks are its supporters, its acolytes and spies. It asserts itself as a protector of the throne it hopes to usurp, of the Valois whom it hopes to destroy.

"We have decided to rise up in arms, and it is because the liberties of the people are threatened as well as the interests of the nobility. We must stifle in its infancy a faction as atrocious as that of the Bourguignons, who of old put Paris and France to fire and sword. A Louis XI. was needed to end the quarrel between the Burgundians and the Crown, but now a Prince of Condé will prevent the Lorraines from going too far. This is not a civil war; it is a duel between the Guises and the Reformation—a duel to the death! We will see their heads low, or they shall crush ours!"

"Well spoken!" said the Prince.

"In these circumstances, Christophe," la Renaudie put in, "we must neglect no means of strengthening our party—for there is a party on the side of the Reformation, the party of offended rights, of the nobles who are sacrificed to the Guises, of the old army leaders so shamefully tricked at Fontainebleau, whence the Cardinal banished them by erecting gibbets to hang those who should ask the King for the price of their outfit and arrears of pay."

"Yes, my son," said Chaudieu, seeing some signs of terror in Christophe, "that is what requires us to triumph by fighting instead of triumphing by conviction and martyrdom. The Queen-mother is ready to enter into our views; not that she is prepared to abjure the Catholic faith—she has not got so far as that, but she may perhaps be driven to it by our success. Be that as it may, humiliated and desperate as she is at seeing the power she had hoped to wield at the King's death in the grasp of the Guises, and alarmed by the influence exerted by the young Queen Marie, who is their niece and partisan, Queen Catherine will be inclined to lend her support to the princes and nobles who are about to strike a blow for her deliverance. At this moment, though apparently devoted to the Guises, she hates them, longs for their ruin, and will make use of us to oppose them; but Monseigneur can make use of her to oppose all the others. The Queen-mother will consent to all we propose. We have the Connétable on our side—Monseigneur has just seen him at Chantilly, but he will not stir without orders from his superiors. Being Monseigneur's uncle, he will not leave us in the lurch, and our generous Prince will not hesitate to rush into danger to enlist Anne de Montmorency.

"Everything is ready; and we have cast our eyes on you to communicate to Queen Catherine our treaty of alliance, our schemes for edicts, and the basis of the new rule. The Court is at Blois. Many of our friends are there; but those are our future chiefs—and, like Monseigneur," and he bowed to the Prince, "they must never be suspected; we must sacri-

fice ourselves for them. The Queen-mother and our friends are under such close espionage, that it is impossible to communicate with them through any one who is known, or of any consequence. Such a person would at once be suspected, and would never be admitted to speak with Madame Catherine. God should indeed give us at this moment the shepherd David with his sling to attack Goliath de Guise. Your father—a good Catholic, more's the pity—is furrier to the two Queens; he always has some garment or trimming in hand for them; persuade him to send you to the Court. You will arouse no suspicions, and will not compromise Queen Catherine. Any one of our leaders might lose his head for an imprudence which should give rise to a suspicion of the Queen-mother's connivance with us. But where a man of importance, once caught out, gives a clue to suspicions, a nobody like you escapes scot-free.—You see! The Guises have so many spies, that nowhere but in the middle of the river can we talk without fear. So you, my son, are like a man on guard, doomed to die at his post. Understand, if you are taken, you are abandoned by us all. If need be, we shall cast opprobrium and disgrace on you. If we shall be forced to it, we should declare that you were a creature of the Guises whom they sent to play a part to implicate us. So what we ask of you is entire self-sacrifice.

"If you perish," said the Prince de Condé, "I pledge my word as a gentleman that your family shall be a sacred trust to the House of Navarre; I will bear it in my heart and serve it in every way."

"That word, my Lord, is enough," replied Christophe, forgetting that this leader of faction was a Gascon. "We live in times when every man, prince or citizen, must do his duty."

"That is a true Huguenot! If all our men were like him," said la Renaudie, laying his hand on Christophe's shoulder, "we should have won by to-morrow."

"Young man," said the Prince, "I meant to show you that while Chaudieu preaches and the gentleman bears arms, the prince fights. Thus, in so fierce a game every stake has its value."

"Listen," said la Renaudie; "I will not give you the papers till we reach Beaugency, for we must run no risks on the road. You will find me on the quay there; my face, voice, and clothes will be so different, that you may not recognize me. But I will say to you, 'Are you a *Guépin?*' and you must reply, 'At your service.'—As to the manner of proceeding, I will tell you. You will find a horse at *la Pinte fleurie,* near Saint-Germain l'Auxerrois. Ask there for Jean le Breton, who will take you to the stable and mount you on a nag of mine known to cover thirty leagues in eight hours. Leave Paris by the Bussy Gate. Breton has a pass for me; take it for yourself and be off, riding round outside the towns. You should reach Orleans by daybreak."

"And the horse?" asked Lecamus.

"He will hold out till you get to Orleans," replied la Renaudie. "Leave him outside the suburb of Bannier, for the gates are well guarded; we must not arouse suspicion. You, my friend, must play your part well. You must make up any story that may seem to you best to enable you to go to the third house on your left on entering Orleans; it is that of one Tourillon, a glover. Knock three raps on the door and call out, 'In the service of Messieurs de Guise!' The man affects to be a fanatical *Guisard;* we four only know that he is on our side. He will find you a boatman, such another as himself of course, but devoted to our cause. Go down to the river at once, get into a boat painted green with a white border. You ought to be at Beaugency by noonday to-morrow. There I will put you in the way of getting a boat to carry you down to Blois without running any danger. Our enemies the Guises do not command the Loire, only the river-ports.

"You may thus see the Queen in the course of to-morrow or of the next day."

"Your words are graven here," said Christophe, touching his forehead.

Chaudieu embraced his son with religious fervency; he was proud of him.

"The Lord protect you!" he said, pointing to the sunset which crimsoned the old roofs covered with shingles, and shot fiery gleams among the forest of beams round which the waters foamed.

"You are of the stock of old Jacques Bonhomme," said la Renaudie to Christophe, wringing his hand.

"We shall meet again, *Monsieur*," said the Prince, with a gesture of infinite graciousness, almost of friendliness.

With a stroke of the oar, la Renaudie carried the young conspirator back to the steps leading up to the house, and the boat vanished at once under the arches of the Pont au Change.

Christophe shook the iron gate that closed the entrance from the river-side and called out; Mademoiselle Lecamus heard him, opened one of the windows of the back-shop, and asked how he came there. Christophe replied that he was half-frozen, and that she must first let him in.

"Young master," said la Bourguignonne, "you went out by the street door and come in by the river-gate? Your father will be in a pretty rage."

Christophe, bewildered by the secret conference which had brought him into contact with the Prince de Condé, la Renaudie, and Chaudieu, and even more agitated by the expected turmoil of an imminent civil war, made no reply; he hurried up from the kitchen to the back-shop. There, on seeing him, his mother, who was a bigoted old Catholic, could not contain herself.

"I will wager," she broke out, "that the three men you were talking to were ref——"

"Silence, wife," said the prudent old man, whose white head was bent over a book. "Now, my lazy oafs," he went on to three boys who had long since finished supper, "what are you waiting for to take you to bed? It is eight o'clock. You must be up by five in the morning. And first you have the Président de Thou's robes and cap to carry home. Go all three together, and carry sticks and rapiers. If you meet any more ne'er-do-weels of your own kidney, at any rate there will be three of you."

"And are we to carry the ermine surcoat ordered by the young Queen, which is to be delivered at the Hôtel de Soissons, from whence there is an express to Blois and to the Queen-mother?" asked one of the lads.

"No," said the Syndic; "Queen Catherine's account amounts to three thousand crowns, and I must get the money. I think I will go to Blois myself."

"I should not think of allowing you, at your age, father, and in such times as these, to expose yourself on the high-roads. I am two-and-twenty; you may send me on this errand," said Christophe, with an eye on a box which he had no doubt contained the surcoat.

"Are you glued to the bench?" cried the old man to the apprentices, who hastily took up their rapiers and capes, and Monsieur de Thou's fur gown.

This illustrious man was to be received on the morrow by the Parlement as their President; he had just signed the death-warrant of the Councillor du Bourg, and was fated, before the year was out, to sit in judgment on the Prince de Condé.

"La Bourguignonne," said the old man, "go and ask my neighbor Lallier if he will sup with us this evening, furnishing the wine; we will give the meal.—And, above all, tell him to bring his daughter."

The Syndic of the Guild of Furriers was a handsome old man of sixty, with white hair and a broad high forehead. As furrier to the Court for forty years past, he had witnessed all the revolutions in the reign of Francis I., and had retained his royal patent in spite of feminine rivalries. He had seen the arrival at Court of Catherine de' Medici, then but just fifteen; he had seen her succumb to the Duchesse d'Etampes, her father-in-law's mistress, and to the Duchesse de Valentinois, mistress to the late King, her husband. But through all these changes the furrier had got into no difficulties, though the Court purveyors often fell into disgrace with the ladies they served. His prudence was as great as

his wealth. He maintained an attitude of excessive humility. Pride had never caught him in its snares. The man was so modest, so meek, so obliging, so poor—at Court and in the presence of queens, princesses, and favorites—that his servility had saved his shop-sign.

Such a line of policy betrayed, of course, a cunning and clear-sighted man. Humble as he was to the outer world, at home he was a despot. He was the unquestioned master in his own house. He was highly respected by his fellow merchants and derived immense consideration from his long tenure of the first place in business. Indeed, he was gladly helpful to others; and among the services he had done, the most important perhaps was the support he had long afforded to the most famous surgeon of the sixteenth century—Ambroise Paré, who owed it to Lecamus that he could pursue his studies. In all the disputes that arose between the merchants of the guild, Lecamus was for conciliatory measures. Thus general esteem had confirmed his supremacy among his equals, while his assumed character had preserved him the favor of the Court.

Having, for political reasons, manœuvred in his parish for the glory of his trade, he did what was needful to keep himself in a sufficient odor of sanctity with the priest of the Church of Saint-Pierre aux Bœufs, who regarded him as one of the men most devoted in all Paris to the Catholic faith. Consequently, when the States-General were convoked, Lecamus was unanimously elected to represent the third estate by the influence of the priests, which was at that time enormous in Paris.

This old man was one of those deep and silent ambitious men who for fifty years are submissive to everybody in turn, creeping up from place to place, no one knowing how, till they are seen peacefully seated in a position which no one, not even the boldest, would have dared to admit was the goal of his ambition at the beginning of his life—so long was the climb, so many gulfs were there to leap, into which he might fall! Lecamus, who had hidden away a large fortune, would

run no risks, and was planning a splendid future for his son. Instead of that personal ambition which often sacrifices the future to the present, he had family ambition, a feeling that seems lost in these days, smothered by the stupid regulation of inheritance by law. Lecamus foresaw himself President of the Paris Parlement in the person of his grandson.

Christophe, the godson of the great historian de Thou, had received an excellent education, but it had led him to scepticism and inquiry, which indeed were increasing apace among the students and Faculties of the University. Christophe was at present studying for the bar, the first step to a judgeship. The old furrier pretended to be undecided as to his son's career; sometimes he would make Christophe his successor, and sometimes he would have him a pleader; but in his heart he longed to see this son in the seat of a Councillor of the Parlement. The furrier longed to place the house of Lecamus on a par with the old and honored families of Paris citizens which had produced a Pasquier, a Molé, a Miron, a Séguier, Lamoignon, du Tillet, Lecoigneux, Lescalopier, the Goix, the Arnaulds,—all the famous sheriffs and high-provosts of corporations who had rallied to defend the throne.

To the end that Christophe might in that day do credit to his rank, he wanted him to marry the daughter of the richest goldsmith in the Cité, his neighbor Lallier, whose nephew, at a later day, presented the keys of Paris to Henry IV. The most deeply rooted purpose in the good man's heart was to spend half his own fortune and half of Lallier's in the purchase of a lordly estate, a long and difficult matter in those days.

But he was too deep a schemer, and knew the times too well, to overlook the great movements that were being hatched; he saw plainly, and saw truly, when he looked forward to the division of the kingdom into two camps. The useless executions on the Place de l'Estrapade, that of Henri II.'s tailor, and that, still more recent, of the Councillor Anne du Bourg, besides the connivance of the reigning

favorite in the time of Francis I., and of many nobles now, at the progress of reform, all were alarming indications. The furrier was determined, come what might, to remain faithful to the Church, the Monarchy, and the Parlement, but he was secretly well content that his son should join the Reformation. He knew that he had wealth enough to ransom Christophe if the lad should ever compromise himself seriously; and then, if France should turn Calvinist, his son could save the family in any furious outbreaks in the capital such as the citizens could vividly remember, and as would recur again and again through four reigns.

Like Louis XI., the old furrier never confessed these thoughts even to himself; his cunning completely deceived his wife and his son. For many a day this solemn personage had been the recognized head of the most populous quarter of Paris—the heart of the city—bearing the title of *Quartenier,* which became notorious fifteen years later. Clothed in cloth, like every prudent citizen who obeyed the sumptuary laws, Master Lecamus—the Sieur Lecamus, a title he held in virtue of an edict of Charles V. permitting the citizens of Paris to purchase *Seigneuries,* and their wives to assume the fine title of *demoiselle* or mistress—wore no gold chain, no silk; only a stout doublet with large buttons of blackened silver, wrinkled hose drawn up above his knee, and leather shoes with buckles. His shirt, of fine linen, was pulled out, in the fashion of the time, into full puffs through his half-buttoned waistcoat and slashed trunks.

Though the full light of the lamp fell on the old man's broad and handsome head, Christophe had no inkling of the thoughts hidden behind that rich Dutch-looking complexion; still he understood that his old father meant to take some advantage of his affection for pretty Babette Lallier. And Christophe, as a man who had laid his own schemes, smiled sadly when he heard the invitation sent to his fair mistress.

As soon as la Bourguignonne and the apprentices were gone, old Lecamus looked at his wife with an expression that fully showed his firm and resolute temper.

"You will never rest till you have got the boy hanged with your damned tongue!" said he in stern tones.

"I would rather see him hanged, but saved, than alive and a Huguenot," was the gloomy reply. "To think that the child I bore within me for nine months should not be a good Catholic, but hanker after the heresies of Colas—that he must spend all eternity in hell——" and she began to cry.

"You old fool!" said the furrier, "then give him a chance of life, if only to convert him! Why, you said a thing, before the apprentices, which might set our house on fire, and roast us all in it like fleas in straw."

The mother crossed herself, but said nothing.

"As for you," said the good man, with a scrutinizing look at his son, "tell me what you were doing out there on the water with——Come close to me while I speak to you," he added, seizing his son by the arm, and drawing him close to him while he whispered in the lad's ear—"with the Prince de Condé." Christophe started. "Do you suppose that the Court furrier does not know all their faces? And do you fancy that I am not aware of what is going on? Monseigneur the Grand Master has ordered out troops to Amboise. And when troops are removed from Paris to Amboise while the Court is at Blois, when they are marched by way of Chartres and Vendôme instead of by Orleans, the meaning is pretty clear, heh? Trouble is brewing.

"If the Queens want their surcoats, they will send for them. The Prince de Condé may be intending to kill Messieurs de Guise, who on their part mean to get rid of him perhaps. Of what use can a furrier's son be in such a broil? When you are married, when you are a pleader in the Parlement, you will be as cautious as your father. A furrier's son has no business to be of the new religion till all the rest of the world is. I say nothing against the Reformers: it is no business of mine; but the Court is Catholic, the two Queens are Catholics, the Parlement is Catholic; we serve them with furs, and we must be Catholic.

"You do not stir from here, Christophe, or I will place

you with your godfather the Président de Thou, who will keep you at it, blackening paper night and day, instead of leaving you to blacken your soul in the hell-broth of these damned Genevese."

"Father," said Christophe, leaning on the back of the old man's chair, "send me off to Blois with Queen Marie's surcoat, and to ask for the money, or I am a lost man. And you love me——"

"Lost!" echoed his father, without any sign of surprise. "If you stay here, you will not be lost. I shall know where to find you."

"I shall be killed."

"Why?"

"The most zealous Huguenots have cast their eyes on me to serve them in a certain matter, and if I fail to do what I have just promised, they will kill me in the street, in the face of day, here, as Minard was killed. But if you send me to the Court on business of your own, I shall probably be able to justify my action to both parties. Either I shall succeed for them without running any risk, and so gain a good position in the party; or, if the danger is too great, I can do your business only."

The old man started to his feet as if his seat were of red-hot iron.

"Wife," said he, "leave us, and see that no one intrudes on Christophe and me."

When Mistress Lecamus had left the room, the furrier took his son by a button and led him to the corner of the room which formed the angle towards the bridge.

"Christophe," said he, quite into his son's ear, as he had just now spoken of the Prince de Condé, "be a Huguenot if that is your pet vice, but with prudence, in your secret heart, and not in such a way as to be pointed at by every one in the neighborhood. What you have just now told me shows me what confidence the leaders have in you.—What are you to do at the Court?"

"I cannot tell you," said Christophe; "I do not quite know that myself yet."

"H'm, h'm," said the old man, looking at the lad, "the young rascal wants to hoodwink his father. He will go far! —Well, well," he went on, in an undertone, "you are not going to Blois to make overtures to the Guises, nor to the little King our Sovereign, nor to little Queen Mary. All these are Catholics; but I could swear that the Italian Queen owes the Scotch woman and the Lorraines some grudge: I know her. She has been dying to put a finger in the pie The late King was so much afraid of her that, like the jewelers, he used diamond to cut diamond, one woman against another. Hence Queen Catherine's hatred of the poor Duchesse de Valentinois, from whom she took the fine Château of Chenonceaux. But for Monsieur le Connétable, the Duchess would have had her neck wrung at least——

"Hands off, my boy! Do not trust yourself within reach of the Italian woman, whose only passions are in her head; a bad sort that.—Ay, the business you are sent to the Court to do will give you a bad headache, I fear," cried the father, seeing that Christophe was about to speak. "My boy, I have two schemes for your future life; you will not spoil them by being of service to Queen Catherine. But, for God's sake, keep your head on your shoulders! And the Guises would cut it off as la Bourguignonne cuts off a turnip, for the people who are employing you would throw you over at once."

"I know that, father," said Christophe.

"And you are so bold as that! You know it, and you will risk it?"

"Yes, father."

"Why, the Devil's in it!" cried the old man, hugging his son, "we may understand each other; you are your father's son.—My boy, you will be a credit to the family, and your old father may be plain with you, I see.—But do not be more of a Huguenot than the Messieurs de Coligny; and do not draw your sword. You are to be a man of the pen; stick to your part as a sucking lawyer.—Well, tell me no more till you have succeeded. If I hear nothing of you for

four days after you reach Blois, that silence will tell me that you are in danger. Then the old man will follow to save the young one. I have not sold furs for thirty years without knowing the seamy side of a Court robe. I can find means of opening doors."

Christophe stared with amazement at hearing his father speak thus; but he feared some parental snare, and held his tongue.

Then he said:

"Very well, make up the account; write a letter to the Queen. I must be off this moment, or dreadful things will happen."

"Be off? But how?"

"I will buy a horse.—Write, for God's sake!"

"Here! Mother! Give your boy some money," the furrier called out to his wife.

She came in, flew to her chest, and gave a purse to Christophe, who excitedly kissed her.

"The account was ready," said his father; "here it is. I will write the letter."

Christophe took the bill and put it in his pocket.

"But at any rate you will sup with us," said the goodman. "In this extremity you and the Lallier girl must exchange rings."

"Well, I will go to fetch her," cried Christophe.

The young man feared some indecision in his father, whose character he did not thoroughly appreciate; he went up to his room, dressed, took out a small trunk, stole downstairs, and placed it with his cloak and rapier under a counter in the shop.

"What the devil are you about?" asked his father, hearing him there.

"I do not want any one to see my preparations for leaving; I have put everything under the counter," he whispered in reply.

"And here is the letter," said his father.

Christophe took the paper, and went out as if to fetch their neighbor.

A few moments after Christophe had gone out, old Lallier and his daughter came in, preceded by a woman-servant carrying three bottles of old wine.

"Well, and where is Christophe?" asked the furrier and his wife.

"Christophe?" said Babette; "we have not seen him."

"A pretty rogue is my son!" cried Lecamus. "He tricks me as if I had no beard. Why, old gossip, what will come to us? We live in times when the children are all too clever for their fathers!"

"But he has long been regarded by all the neighbors as a mad follower of Colas," said Lallier.

"Defend him stoutly on that score," said the furrier to the goldsmith. "Youth is foolish, and runs after anything new; but Babette will keep him quiet, she is even newer than Calvin."

Babette smiled. She truly loved Christophe, was affronted by everything that was ever said against him. She was a girl of the good old middle-class type, brought up under her mother's eye, for she had never left her; her demeanor was as gentle and precise as her features; she was dressed in stuff of harmonious tones of gray; her ruff, plainly pleated, was a contrast by its whiteness to her sober gown; on her head was a black velvet cap, like a child's hood in shape, but trimmed, on each side of her face, with frills and ends of tan-colored gauze. Though she was fair-haired, with a white skin, she seemed cunning and crafty, though trying to hide her wiliness under the expression of a simple and honest girl.

As long as the two women remained in the room, coming to and fro to lay the cloth, and place the jugs, the large pewter dishes, and the knives and forks, the goldsmith and his daughter, the furrier and his wife, sat in front of the high chimney-place, hung with red serge and black fringes, talking of nothing. It was in vain that Babette asked where Christophe could be; the young Huguenot's father and mother made ambiguous replies; but as soon as the

party had sat down to their meal, and the two maids were in the kitchen. Lecamus said to his future daughter-in-law:

"Christophe is gone to the Court."

"To Blois! What a journey to take without saying good-bye to me!" said Babette.

"He was in a great hurry," said his old mother.

"Old friend," said the furrier to Lallier, taking up the thread of the conversation, "we are going to see hot work in France; the Reformers are astir."

"If they win the day, it will only be after long fighting, which will be very bad for trade," said Lallier, incapable of looking higher than the commercial point of view.

"My father, who had seen the end of the wars between the Bourguignons and the Armagnacs, told me that our family would never have lived through them if one of his grandfathers—his mother's father—had not been one of the Goix, the famous butchers at the Halle, who were attached to the Bourguignons, while the other, a Lecamus, was on the side of the Armagnacs; they pretended to be ready to flay each other before the outer world, but at home they were very good friends. So we will try to save Christophe. Perhaps a time may come when he will save us."

"You are a cunning dog, neighbor," said the goldsmith.

"No," replied Lecamus. "The citizen class must take care of itself, the populace and the nobility alike owe it a grudge. Everybody is afraid of the middle class in Paris excepting the King, who knows us to be his friends."

"You who know so much, and who have seen so much," said Babette timidly, "pray tell me what it is that the Reformers want."

"Ay, tell us that, neighbor!" cried the goldsmith. "I knew the late King's tailor, and I always took him to be a simple soul, with no great genius; he was much such another as you are, they would have given him the Host without requiring him to confess, and all the time he was up to his eyes in this new religion.—He! a man whose ears were worth many hundred thousand crowns. He must have known

some secrets worth hearing for the King and Madame de Valentinois to be present when he was tortured."

"Ay! and terrible secrets too," said the furrier. "The Reformation, my friends," he went on, in a low voice, "will give the Church lands back to the citizen class. When ecclesiastical privileges are annulled, the Reformers mean to claim equality of taxation for the nobles and the middle class, and to have only the King above all alike—if indeed they have a king at all."

"What, do away with the Throne?" cried Lallier.

"Well, neighbor," said Lecamus, "in the Low Countries the citizens govern themselves by provosts over them, who elect a temporary chief."

"God bless me! Neighbor, we might do all these fine things, and still be Catholics," said the goldsmith.

"We are too old to see the triumph of the middle class in Paris, but it will triumph, neighbor, all in good time! Why, the King is bound to rely on us to hold his own, and we have always been well paid for our support. And the last time all the citizens were ennobled, and they had leave to buy manors, and take the names of their estates without any special letters patent from the King. You and I, for instance, grandsons of the Goix in the female line, are we not as good as many a nobleman?"

This speech was so alarming to the goldsmith and the two women, that it was followed by a long silence. The leaven of 1789 was already germinating in the blood of Lecamus, who was not yet so old but that he lived to see the daring of his class under the Ligue.

"Is business pretty firm in spite of all this turmoil?" Lallier asked the furrier's wife.

"It always upsets trade a little," said she.

"Yes, and so I have a great mind to make a lawyer of my son," added Lecamus. "People are always going to law."

The conversation then dwelt on the commonplace, to the goldsmith's great satisfaction, for he did not like political disturbances or over-boldness of thought.

The banks of the Loire, from Blois as far as Angers, were always greatly favored by the two last branches of the Royal Family who occupied the throne before the advent of the Bourbons. This beautiful valley so well deserves the preference of kings, that one of our most elegant writers describes it as follows:—"There is a province in France which is never sufficiently admired. As fragrant as Italy, as flowery as the banks of the Guadalquivir, beautiful besides with its own peculiar beauty. Wholly French, it has always been French, unlike our Northern provinces, debased by Teutonic influence, or our Southern provinces, which have been the concubines of the Moors, of the Spaniards, of every nation that has coveted them—this pure, chaste, brave, and loyal tract is Touraine! There is the seat of historic France. Auvergne is Auvergne, Languedoc is Languedoc and nothing more; but Touraine is France, and the truly national river to us is the Loire which waters Touraine. We need not, therefore, be surprised to find such a quantity of monuments in the departments which have taken their names from that of the Loire and its derivations. At every step in that land of enchantment we come upon a picture of which the foreground is the river, or some calm reach, in whose liquid depths are mirrored a château, with its turrets, its woods, and its dancing springs. It was only natural that large fortunes should centre round spots where Royalty preferred to live, and where it so long held its Court, and that distinguished birth and merit should crowd thither and build palaces on a par with Royalty itself."

Is it not strange, indeed, that our sovereigns should never have taken the advice indirectly given them by Louis XI., and have made Tours the capital of the kingdom? Without any very great expenditure, the Loire might have been navigable so far for trading vessels and light ships of war. There the seat of Government would have been safe from surprise and high-handed invasion. There the strongholds of the north would not have needed such sums for their fortifications, which alone have cost as much money as all the splen-

dors of Versailles. If Louis XIV. had listened to Vauban's advice, and had his palace built at Mont-Louis, between the Loire and the Cher, perhaps the Revolution of 1789 would never have taken place.

So these fair banks bear, at various spots, clear marks of royal favor. The châteaux of Chambord, Blois, Amboise, Chenonceaux, Chaumont, Plessis-les-Tours, all the residences built by kings' mistresses, by financiers, and noblemen, at Véretz, Azay-le-Rideau, Ussé, Villandri, Valençay, Chanteloup, and Duretal, some of which have disappeared, though most are still standing, are splendid buildings, full of the wonders of the period that has been so little appreciated by the literary sect of Mediævalists.

Of all these châteaux, that of Blois, where the Court was then residing, is the one on which the magnificence of the Houses of Orleans and of Valois has most splendidly set its stamp; and it is the most curious to historians, archæologists, and Catholics. At that time it stood quite alone. The town, enclosed in strong walls with towers, lay below the stronghold, for at that time the château served both as a citadel and as a country residence. Overlooking the town, of which the houses, then as now, climb the hill on the right bank of the river, their blue slate roofs in close array, there is a triangular plateau, divided by a stream, now unimportant since it runs underground, but in the fifteenth century, as historians tell us, flowing at the bottom of a rather steep ravine, part of which remains as a deep hollow way, almost a precipice, between the suburb and the château.

It was on this plateau, with a slope to the north and south, that the Comtes de Blois built themselves a "castel" in the architecture of the twelfth century, where the notorious Thibault le Tricheur, Thibault le Vieux, and many more held a court that became famous. In those days of pure feudal rule, when the King was no more than *inter pares primus* (the first among equals), as a King of Poland finely expressed it, the Counts of Champagne, of Blois, and of Anjou, the mere Barons of Normandy, and the Dukes of Brittany

lived in the style of sovereigns and gave kings to the proudest kingdoms. The Plantagenets of Anjou, the Lusignans of Poitou, the Roberts and Williams of Normandy, by their audacious courage mingled their blood with royal races, and sometimes a simple knight, like du Glaicquin (or du Guesclin), refused royal purple and preferred the Constable's sword.

When the Crown had secured Blois as a royal demesne, Louis XII., who took a fancy to the place, perhaps to get away from Plessis and its sinister associations, built on to the château, at an angle, so as to face east and west, a wing connecting the residence of the Counts of Blois with the older structure, of which nothing now remains but the immense hall where the States-General sat under Henri III. Francis I., before he fell in love with Chambord, intended to finish the château by building on the other two sides of a square; but he abandoned Blois for Chambord, and erected only one wing, which in his time and in that of his grandsons practically constituted the château.

This third building of Francis I.'s is much more extensive and more highly decorated than the Louvre *de Henri II.*, as it is called. It is one of the most fantastic efforts of the architecture of the Renaissance. Indeed, at a time when a more reserved style of building prevailed, and no one cared for the Middle Ages, a time when literature was not so intimately allied with art as it now is, la Fontaine wrote of the Château of Blois in his characteristically artless language: "Looking at it from outside, the part done by order of Francis I. pleased me more than all the rest; there are a number of little windows, little balconies, little colonnades, little ornaments, not regularly ordered, which make up something great which I found very pleasing."

Thus the Château of Blois had the attraction of representing three different kinds of architecture—three periods, three systems, three dynasties. And there is not, perhaps, any other royal residence which in this respect can compare with it. The vast building shows, in one enclosure, in one court-

yard, a complete picture of that great product of national life and manners which Architecture always is.

At the time when Christophe was bound for the Court, that portion of the precincts on which a fourth palace now stands—the wing added seventy years later, during his exile, by Gaston, Louis XIII.'s rebellious brother—was laid out in pastures and terraced gardens, picturesquely scattered among the foundation stones and unfinished towers begun by Francis I. These gardens were joined by a bold flying bridge —which some old inhabitants still alive saw destroyed—to a garden on the other side of the château, which by the slope of the ground lay on the same level. The gentlemen attached to Queen Anne de Bretagne, or those who approached her with petitions from her native province, to discuss, or to inform her of the state of affairs there, were wont to await her pleasure here, her *lever*, or the hour of her walking out. Hence history has handed down to us as the name of this pleasaunce *Le Perchoir aux Bretons* (the Breton's Perch); it now is an orchard belonging to some private citizen, projecting beyond the Place des Jésuites. That square also was then included in the domain of this noble residence which had its upper and its lower gardens. At some distance from the Place des Jésuites, a summer-house may still be seen built by Catherine de' Medici, as local historians tell us, to accommodate her hot baths. This statement enables us to trace the very irregular arrangement of the gardens which went up and down hill, following the undulations of the soil; the land about the château is indeed very uneven, a fact which added to its strength, and, as we shall see, caused the difficulties of the Duc de Guise.

The gardens were reached by corridors and terraces; the chief corridor was known as the Galerie des Cerfs (or stags), on account of its decorations. This passage led to a magnificent staircase, which undoubtedly suggested the famous double staircase at Chambord, and which led to the apartments on each floor.

Though la Fontaine preferred the château of Francis I.

to that of Louis XII., the simplicity of the *Père du Peuple* may perhaps charm the genuine artist, much as he may admire the splendor of the more chivalrous king. The elegance of the two staircases which lie at the two extremities of Louis XII.'s building, the quantity of fine and original carving, of which, though time has damaged them, the remains are still the delight of antiquaries; everything, to the almost cloister-like arrangement of the rooms, points to very simple habits. As yet the Court was evidently non-existent, or had not attained such development as Francis I. and Catherine de' Medici subsequently gave it, to the great detriment of feudal manners. As we admire the brackets, the capitals of some of the columns, and some little figures of exquisite delicacy, it is impossible not to fancy that Michel Colomb, the great sculptor, the Michael Angelo of Brittany, must have passed that way to do his Queen Anne a pleasure, before immortalizing her on her father's tomb—the last Duke of Brittany.

Whatever la Fontaine may say, nothing can be more stately than the residence of Francis, the magnificent King. Thanks to I know not what coarse indifference, perhaps to utter forgetfulness, the rooms occupied by Catherine de' Medici and her son Francis II. still remain almost in their original state. The historian may reanimate them with the tragical scenes of the Reformation, of which the struggle of the Guises and the Bourbons against the House of Valois formed a complicated drama played out on this spot.

The buildings of Francis I. quite crush the simpler residence of Louis XII. by sheer mass. From the side of the lower gardens, that is to say, from the modern Place des Jésuites, the château is twice as lofty as from the side towards the inner court. The ground floor, in which are the famous corridors, is the second floor in the garden front. Thus the first floor, where Queen Catherine resided, is in fact the third, and the royal apartments are on the fourth above the lower garden, which at that time was divided from the foundations by a very deep moat. Thus the château, im-

posing as it is from the court, seems quite gigantic when seen from the Place as la Fontaine saw it, for he owns that he never had been into the court or the rooms. From the Place des Jésuites every detail looks small. The balconies you can walk along, the colonnades of exquisite workmanship, the sculptured windows—their recesses within, as large as small rooms, and used, in fact, at that time as boudoirs—have a general effect resembling the painted fancies of operatic scenery when the artist represents a fairy palace. But once inside the court, the infinite delicacy of this architectural ornamentation is displayed, to the joy of the amazed spectator, though the stories above the ground floor are, even there, as high as the Pavillon de l'Horloge at the Tuileries.

This part of the building, where Catherine and Mary Stuart held magnificent court, had in the middle of the façade a hexagonal hollow tower, up which winds a staircase in stone, an arabesque device invented by giants and executed by dwarfs to give this front the effect of a dream. The balustrade of the stairs rises in a spiral of rectangular panels composing the five walls of the tower, and forming at regular intervals a transverse cornice, enriched outside and in with florid carvings in stone. This bewildering creation, full of delicate and ingenious details and marvels of workmanship, by which these stones speak to us, can only be compared to the overcharged and deeply cut ivory carvings that come from China, or are made at Dieppe. In short, the stone is like lace. Flowers and figures of men and animals creep down the ribs, multiply at every step, and crown the vault with a pendant, in which the chisels of sixteenth century sculptors have outdone the artless stone-carvers who, fifty years before, had made the pendants for two staircases in Louis XII.'s building. Though we may be dazzled as we note these varied forms repeated with infinite prolixity, we nevertheless perceive that Francis I. lacked money for Blois, just as Louis XIV. did for Versailles. In more than one instance a graceful head looks out from a block of stone almost in the rough. More than

one fanciful boss is but sketched with a few strokes of the chisel, and then abandoned to the damp, which has overgrown it with green mould. On the façade, by the side of one window carved like lace, another shows us the massive frame eaten into by time, which has carved it after a manner of its own.

The least artistic, the least experienced eye finds here a delightful contrast between this front, rippling with marvels of design, and the inner front of Louis XII.'s château, consisting on the ground floor of arches of the airiest lightness, upheld by slender columns, resting on elegant balustrades, and two stories above with windows wrought with charming severity. Under the arches runs a gallery, of which the walls were painted in fresco; the vaulting too must have been painted, for some traces are still visible of that magnificence, imitated from Italian architecture—a reminiscence of our Kings' journeys thither when the Milanese belonged to them.

Opposite the residence of Francis I. there was at that time the chapel of the Counts of Blois, its façade almost harmonizing with the architecture of Louis XII.'s building. No figure of speech can give an adequate idea of the solid dignity of these three masses of building. In spite of the varieties of style, a certain imposing royalty, showing the extent of its fear by the magnitude of its defences, held the three buildings together, different as they were; two of them flanking the immense hall of the States-General, as vast and lofty as a church.

And certainly neither the simplicity nor the solidity of those citizen lives which were described at the beginning of this narrative—lives in which Art was always represented—was lacking to this royal residence. Blois was the fertile and brilliant example which found a living response from citizens and nobles, from money and rank, alike in towns and in the country. You could not have wished that the home of the King who ruled Paris as it was in the sixteenth century should be other than this. The splendid raiment

of the upper classes, the luxury of feminine attire, must have seemed singularly suited to the elaborate dress of the curiously wrought stones.

From floor to floor, as he mounted the wonderful stairs of his castle of Blois, the King of France could see further and further over the beautiful Loire, which brought him news of all his realm, which it parts into two confronted and almost rival halves. If, instead of placing Chambord in a dead and gloomy plain two leagues away, Francis I. had built a Chambord to complete Blois on the site of the gardens, where Gaston subsequently erected his palace, Versailles would never have existed, and Blois would inevitably have become the capital of France.

Four Valois and Catherine de' Medici lavished their wealth on the Château of Blois, but any one can guess how prodigal the sovereigns were, only from seeing the thick dividing wall, the spinal column of the building, with deep alcoves cut into its substance, secret stairs and closets contrived within it, surrounding such vast rooms as the council hall, the guard-room, and the royal apartments, in which a company of infantry now finds ample quarters. Even if the visitor should fail to understand at a first glance that the marvels of the interior are worthy of those of the exterior, the remains of Catherine de' Medici's room—into which Christophe was presently admitted—are sufficient evidence of the elegant art which peopled these rooms with lively fancies, with salamanders sparkling among flowers, with all the most brilliant hues of the palette of the sixteenth century decorating the darkest staircase. In that room the observer may still see the traces of that love of gilding which Catherine had brought from Italy, for the princesses of her country loved (as the author above quoted delightfully expresses it) to overlay the châteaux of France with the gold gained in trade by their ancestors, and to stamp the walls of royal rooms with the sign of their wealth.

The Queen-mother occupied the rooms on the first floor that had formerly been those of Queen Claude de France,

Francis I.'s wife; and the delicate sculpture is still to be seen of double C's, with a device in pure white of swans and lilies, signifying *Candidior candidis*, the whitest of the white, the badge of that Queen whose name, like Catherine's, began with C, and equally appropriate to Louis XII.'s daughter and to the mother of the Valois; for notwithstanding the violence of Calvinist slander, no doubt was ever thrown on Catherine de' Medici's enduring fidelity to Henri II.

The Queen-mother, with two young children still on her hands—a boy, afterwards the Duc d'Alençon, and Marguerite, who became the wife of Henri IV., and whom Charles IX. called Margot—needed the whole of this first floor.

King Francis II. and his Queen Mary Stuart had the royal apartments on the second floor that Francis I. had occupied, and which were also those of Henri III. The royal apartments, and those of the Queen-mother, are divided from end to end of the château into two parts by the famous party wall, four feet thick, which supports the thrust of the immensely thick walls of the rooms. Thus on the lower as well as on the upper floor the rooms are in two distinct suites. That half which, facing the south, is lighted from the court, held the rooms for state receptions and public business; while, to escape the heat, the private rooms had a north aspect, where there is a splendid frontage with arcades and balconies, and a view over the county of the Vendômois, the *Perchoir aux Bretons*, and the moats of the town—the only town mentioned by the great fable writer, the admirable la Fontaine.

Francis I.'s château at that time ended at an enormous tower, only begun, but intended to mark the vast angle the palace would have formed in turning a flank; Gaston subsequently demolished part of its walls to attach his palace to the tower; but he never finished the work, and the tower remains a ruin. This royal keep was used as a prison, or, according to popular tradition, as *oubliettes*. What poet would not feel deep regret or weep for France as he wanders now through the hall of this magnificent château, and sees

the exquisite arabesques of Catherine de' Medici's room, whitewashed and almost smothered by order of the governor of the barracks at the time of the cholera—for this royal residence is now a barrack.

The paneling of Catherine de' Medici's closet, of which more particular mention will presently be made, is the last relic of the rich furnishing collected by five artistic kings.

As we make our way through this labyrinth of rooms, halls, staircases, and turrets, we can say with horrible certainty, "Here Mary Stuart cajoled her husband in favor of the Guises. There those Guises insulted Catherine. Later, on this very spot, the younger *Balafré* fell under the swords of the avengers of the Crown. A century earlier Louis XII. signaled from that window to invite the advance of his friend the Cardinal d'Amboise. From this balcony d'Épernon, Ravaillac's accomplice, welcomed Queen Marie de' Medici, who, it is said, knew of the intended regicide and left things to take their course!"

In the chapel where Henri IV. and Marguerite de Valois were betrothed—the last remnant of the old château of the Counts of Blois—the regimental boots are made. This wonderful structure, where so many styles are combined, where such great events have been accomplished, is in a state of ruin which is a disgrace to France. How grievous it is to those who love the memorial buildings of old France, to feel that ere long these eloquent stones will have gone the way of the house at the corner of the Rue de la Vieille-Pelleterie: they will survive, perhaps, only in these pages.

It is necessary to observe that, in order to keep a keener eye on the Court, the Guises, though they had a mansion in the town, which is still to be seen, had obtained permission to reside above the rooms of Louis XII. in the apartments since used by the Duchesse de Nemours, in the upper story on the second floor.

Francis II. and his young Queen, Mary Stuart, in love like two children of sixteen, as they were, had been suddenly

transferred, one cold winter's day, from Saint-Germain, which the Duc de Guise thought too open to surprise, to the stronghold, as it then was, of Blois, isolated on three sides by precipitous slopes, while its gates were strictly guarded. The Guises, the Queen's uncles, had the strongest reasons for not living in Paris, and for detaining the Court in a place which could be easily guarded and defended.

A struggle for the throne was being carried on, which was not ended till twenty-eight years later, in 1588, when, in this same château of Blois, Henri III., bitterly humiliated by the House of Lorraine, under his mother's very eyes, planned the death of the boldest of the Guises, the second Balafré (or scarred), son of the first Balafré, by whom Catherine de' Medici was tricked, imprisoned, spied on, and threatened.

Indeed, the fine Château of Blois was to Catherine the strictest prison. On the death of her husband, who had always kept her in leading-strings, she had hoped to rule; but, on the contrary, she found herself a slave to strangers, whose politeness was infinitely more cruel than the brutality of jailers. She could do nothing that was not known. Those of her ladies who were attached to her either had lovers devoted to the Guises, or Argus eyes watching over them. Indeed, at that time the conflict of passions had the capricious vagaries which they always derive from the powerful antagonism of two hostile interests in the State. Love-making, which served Catherine well, was also an instrument in the hands of the Guises. Thus the Prince de Condé, the leader of the Reformed party, was attached to the Maréchale de Saint-André, whose husband was the Grand Master's tool. The Cardinal, who had learned from the affair of the Vidame de Chartres that Catherine was unconquered rather than unconquerable, was paying court to her. Thus the play of passions brought strange complications into that of politics, making a double game of chess, as it were, in which it was necessary to read both the heart and brain of a man, and to judge, on occasion, whether one would not belie the other.

Though she lived constantly under the eye of the Cardinal de Lorraine or of his brother, the Duc François de Guise, who both distrusted her, Catherine's most immediate and shrewdest enemy was her daughter-in-law, Queen Mary, a little fair girl as mischievous as a waiting-maid, as proud as a Stuart might be who wore three crowns, as learned as an ancient scholar, as tricky as a school-girl, as much in love with her husband as a courtesan of her lover, devoted to her uncles, whom she admired, and delighted to find that King Francis, by her persuasion, shared her high opinion of them. A mother-in-law is always a person disliked by her daughter-in-law, especially when she has won the crown and would like to keep it—as Catherine had imprudently too plainly shown. Her former position, when Diane de Poitiers ruled King Henri II., had been more endurable; at least she had enjoyed the homage due to a Queen, and the respect of the Court; whereas, now, the Duke and the Cardinal, having none about them but their own creatures, seemed to take pleasure in humiliating her. Catherine, a prisoner among courtiers, was the object, not every day, but every hour, of blows offensive to her dignity; for the Guises persisted in carrying on the same system as the late King had employed to thwart her.

The six-and-thirty years of disaster which devastated France may be said to have begun with the scene in which the most perilous part had been allotted to the son of the Queen's furrier—a part which makes him the leading figure in this narrative. The danger into which this zealous reformer was falling became evident in the course of the morning when he set out from the river-port of Beaugency, carrying precious documents which compromised the loftiest heads of the nobility, and embarked for Blois in company with a crafty partisan, the indefatigable la Renaudie, who had arrived on the quay before him.

While the barque conveying Christophe was being wafted down the Loire before a light easterly breeze, the famous Cardinal de Lorraine, and the second Duc de Guise, one of

the greatest war captains of the time, were considering their position, like two eagles on a rocky peak, and looking cautiously round before striking the first great blow by which they tried to kill the Reformation in France. This was to be struck at Amboise, and it was repeated in Paris twelve years later, on the 24th August 1572.

In the course of the previous night, three gentlemen, who played an important part in the twelve years' drama that arose from this double plot by the Guises on one hand and the Reformers on the other, had arrived at the château at a furious gallop, leaving their horses half dead at the postern gate, held by captains and men who were wholly devoted to the Duc de Guise, the idol of the soldiery.

A word must be said as to this great man, and first of all a word to explain his present position.

His mother was Antoinette de Bourbon, great-aunt of Henri IV. But of what account are alliances! At this moment he aimed at nothing less than his cousin de Condé's head. Mary Stuart was his niece. His wife was Anne, daughter of the Duke of Ferrara. The Grand Connétable Anne de Montmorency addressed the Duc de Guise as "Monseigneur," as he wrote to the King, and signed himself "Your very humble servant." Guise, the Grand Master of the King's household, wrote in reply, "Monsieur le Connétable," and signed, as in writing to the Parlement, "Your faithful friend."

As for the Cardinal, nicknamed the Transalpine Pope, and spoken of by Estienne as "His Holiness," the whole Monastic Church of France was on his side, and he treated with the Pope as his equal. He was vain of his eloquence, and one of the ablest theologians of his time, while he kept watch over France and Italy by the instrumentality of three religious Orders entirely devoted to him, who were on foot for him day and night, serving him as spies and reporters.

These few words are enough to show to what a height of power the Cardinal and the Duke had risen. In spite of their wealth and the revenues of their officers, they were so

entirely disinterested, or so much carried away by the tide of politics, and so generous too, that both were in debt—no doubt after the manner of Cæsar. Hence, when Henri III. had seen his threatening foe murdered, the second Balafré, the House of Guise was inevitably ruined. Their vast outlay for above a century, in hope of seizing the Crown, accounts for the decay of this great House under Louis XIII. and Louis XIV., when the sudden end of MADAME revealed to all Europe how low a Chevalier de Lorraine had fallen.

So the Cardinal and the Duke, proclaiming themselves the heirs of the deposed Carlovingian kings, behaved very insolently to Catherine de' Medici, their niece's mother-in-law. The Duchesse de Guise spared Catherine no mortification; she was an Este, and Catherine de' Medici was the daughter of self-made Florentine merchants, whom the sovereigns of Europe had not yet admitted to their royal fraternity. Francis I. had regarded his son's marriage with a Medici as a mésalliance, and had only allowed it in the belief that this son would never be the Dauphin. Hence his fury when the Dauphin died, poisoned by the Florentine Montecuculi.

The Estes refused to recognize the Medici as Italian princes. These time-honored merchants were, in fact, struggling with the impossible problem of maintaining a throne in the midst of Republican institutions. The title of Grand Duke was not bestowed on the Medici till much later by Philip II., King of Spain; and they earned it by treason to France, their benefactress, and by a servile attachment to the Court of Spain, which was covertly thwarting them in Italy.

"Flatter none but your enemies!" This great axiom, uttered by Catherine, would seem to have ruled all the policy of this merchant race, which never lacked great men till its destinies had grown great, and which broke down a little too soon under the degeneracy which is always the end of royal dynasties and great families.

For three generations there was a prelate and a warrior

of the House of Lorraine; but, which is perhaps not less remarkable, the Churchman had always shown—as did the present Cardinal—a singular likeness to Cardinal Ximenes, whom the Cardinal de Richelieu also resembled. These five prelates all had faces that were at once mean and terrifying; while the warrior's face was of that Basque and mountain type which reappears in the features of Henri IV. In both the father and the son it was seamed by a scar, which did not destroy the grace and affability that bewitched their soldiers as much as their bravery.

The way and the occasion of the Grand Master's being wounded is not without interest here, for it was healed by the daring of one of the personages of this drama, Ambroise Paré, who was under obligation to the Syndic of the furriers. At the siege of Calais the Duke's head was pierced by a lance which, entering below the right eye, went through to the neck below the left ear, the end broke off and remained in the wound. The Duke was lying in his tent in the midst of the general woe, and would have died but for the bold promptitude and devotion of Ambroise Paré.

"The Duke is not dead, gentlemen," said Paré, turning to the bystanders, who were dissolved in tears. "But he soon will be," he added, "unless I treat him as if he were, and I will try it at the risk of the worst that can befall me. . . . You see!"

He set his left foot on the Duke's breast, took the stump of the lance with his nails, loosened it by degrees, and at last drew the spear-head out of the wound, as if it had been from some senseless object instead of a man's head. Though he cured the Prince he had handled so boldly, he could not hinder him from bearing to his grave the terrible scar from which he had his name. His son also had the same nickname for a similar reason.

Having gained entire mastery over the King, who was ruled by his wife, as a result of the passionate and mutual affection which the Guises knew how to turn to account, the two great Princes of Lorraine reigned over France, and had

not an enemy at Court but Catherine de' Medici. And no great politician ever played a closer game. The respective attitudes of Henri II.'s ambitious widow, and of the no less ambitious House of Lorraine, was symbolized, as it were, by the positions they held on the terrace of the château on the very morning when Christophe was about to arrive there. The Queen-mother, feigning extreme affection for the Guises, had asked to be informed as to the news brought by the three gentlemen who had arrived from different parts of the kingdom; but she had been mortified by a polite dismissal from the Cardinal. She was walking at the further end of the pleasaunce above the Loire, where she was having an observatory erected for her astrologer, Ruggieri; the building may still be seen, and from it a wide view is to be had over the beautiful valley. The two Guises were on the opposite side overlooking the Vendômois, the upper part of the town, the Perchoir aux Bretons, and the postern gate of the château.

Catherine had deceived the brothers, tricking them by an assumption of dissatisfaction: for she was really very glad to be able to speak with one of the gentlemen who had come in hot haste, and who was in her secret confidence; who boldly played a double game, but who was, to be sure, well paid for it. This gentleman was Chiverni, who affected to be the mere tool of the Cardinal de Lorraine, but who was in reality in Catherine's service. Catherine had two other devoted allies in the two Gondis, creatures of her own; but they, as Florentines, were too open to the suspicions of the Guises to be sent into the country; she kept them at the Court, where their every word and action was closely watched, but where they, on their side, watched the Guises and reported to Catherine. These two Italians kept a third adherent to the Queen-mother's faction, Birague, a clever Piedmontese who, like Chiverni, pretended to have abandoned Catherine to attach himself to the Guises, and who encouraged them in their undertakings while spying for Catherine.

Chiverni had arrived from Écouen and Paris. The last

to ride in was Saint-André, Marshal of France, who rose to be such an important personage that the Guises adopted him as the third of the triumvirate they formed against Catherine in the following year. But earlier than either of these, Vieilleville, the builder of the Château of Duretal, who had also by his devotion to the Guises earned the rank of Marshal, had secretly come and more secretly gone, without any one knowing what the mission might be that the Grand Master had given him. Saint-André, it was known, had been instructed to take military measures to entice all the reformers who were under arms to Amboise, as the result of a council held by the Cardinal de Lorraine, the Duc de Guise, Birague, Chiverni, Vieilleville, and Saint-André. As the heads of the House of Lorraine thus employed Birague, it is to be supposed that they trusted to their strength, for they knew that he was attached to the Queen-mother; but it is possible that they kept him about them with a view to discovering their rival's secret designs, as she allowed him to attend them. In those strange times the double part played by some political intriguers was known to both the parties who employed them; they were like cards in the hands of players, and the craftiest won the game.

All through this sitting the brothers had been impenetrably guarded. Catherine's conversation with her friends will, however, fully explain the purpose of this meeting, convened by the Guises in the open air, at break of day, in the terraced garden, as though every one feared to speak within the walls full of ears of the Château of Blois.

The Queen-mother, who had been walking about all the morning with the two Gondis, under pretence of examining the observatory that was being built, but, in fact, anxiously watching the hostile party, was presently joined by Chiverni. She was standing at the angle of the terrace opposite the Church of Saint-Nicholas, and there feared no listeners. The wall is as high as the church-towers, and the Guises always held council at the other corner of the terrace, below the dungeon then begun, walking to and from the Perchoir

des Bretons and the arcade by the bridge which joined the gardens to the Perchoir. There was nobody at the bottom of the ravine.

Chiverni took the Queen's hand to kiss it, and slipped into her fingers a tiny letter without being seen by the Italians. Catherine quickly turned away, walked to the corner of the parapet, and read as follows:—

"You are powerful enough to keep the balance true between the great ones, and to make them contend as to which shall serve you best; you have your house full of kings, and need not fear either Lorraines or Bourbons so long as you set them against each other: for both sides aim at snatching the crown from your children. Be your advisers' mistress, and not their slave; keep up each side by the other; otherwise the kingdom will go from bad to worse, and great wars may ensue. L'HÔPITAL."

The Queen placed this letter in the bosom of her stomacher, reminding herself to burn it as soon as she should be alone.

"When did you see him?" she asked Chiverni.

"On returning from seeing the Connétable at Melun; he was going though with the Duchesse de Berri, whom he was most anxious to convey in safety to Savoy, so as to return here and enlighten the Chancellor Olivier, who is, in fact, the dupe of the Lorraines. Monsieur de l'Hôpital is resolved to adhere to your cause, seeing the aims that Messieurs de Guise have in view. And he will hasten back as fast as possible to give you his vote in the Council."

"Is he sincere?" said Catherine. "For you know that when the Lorraines admitted him to the Council, it was to enable them to rule."

"L'Hôpital is a Frenchman of too good a stock not to be honest," said Chiverni; "besides, that letter is a sufficient pledge."

"And what answer does the Connétable send to these gentlemen?"

"He says the King is his master, and he awaits his orders. On this reply, the Cardinal, to prevent any resistance, will propose to appoint his brother Lieutenant-General of the realm."

"So soon!" cried Catherine in dismay. "Well, and did Monsieur de l'Hôpital give you any further message for me?"

"He told me, madame, that you alone can stand between the throne and Messieurs de Guise."

"But does he suppose that I will use the Huguenots as a means of defence?"

"Oh, madame," cried Chiverni, surprised by her perspicacity, "we never thought of placing you in such a difficult position."

"Did he know what a position I am in?" asked the Queen calmly.

"Pretty nearly. He thinks you made a dupe's bargain when, on the death of the late King, you accepted for your share the fragments saved from the ruin of Madame Diane. Messieurs de Guise thought they had paid their debt to the Queen by gratifying the woman."

"Yes," said Catherine, looking at the two Gondis, "I made a great mistake there."

"A mistake the gods might make!" replied Charles de Gondi.

"Gentlemen," said the Queen, "if I openly take up the cause of the Reformers, I shall be the slave of a party."

"Madame," said Chiverni eagerly, "I entirely agree with you. You must make use of them, but not let them make use of you."

"Although, for the moment, your strength lies there," said Charles de Gondi, "we must not deceive ourselves; success and failure are equally dangerous!"

"I know it," said the Queen. "One false move will be a pretext eagerly seized by the Guises to sweep me off the board!"

"A Pope's niece, the mother of four Valois, the Queen of

France, the widow of the most ardent persecutor of the Huguenots, an Italian and a Catholic, the aunt of Leo X.,—can you form an alliance with the Reformation?" asked Charles de Gondi.

"On the other hand," Albert replied, "is not seconding the Guises consenting to usurpation? You have to deal with a race that looks to the struggle between the Church and the Reformation to give them a crown for the taking. You may avail yourself of Huguenot help without abjuring the Faith."

"Remember, madame, that your family, which ought to be wholly devoted to the King of France, is at this moment in the service of the King of Spain," said Chiverni. "And it would go over to the Reformation to-morrow if the Reformation could make the Duke of Florence King!"

"I am very well inclined to give the Huguenots a helping hand for a time," said Catherine, "were it only to be revenged on that soldier, that priest, and that woman!"

And with an Italian glance, her eye turned on the Duke and the Cardinal, and then to the upper rooms of the château where her son lived and Mary Stuart. "Those three snatched the reins of government from my hands," she went on, "when I had waited for them long enough while that old woman held them in my place."

She jerked her head in the direction of Chenonceaux, the château she had just exchanged for Chaumont with Diane de Poitiers. "*Ma,*" she said in Italian, "it would seem that these gentry of the Geneva bands have not wit enough to apply to me!—On my honor, I cannot go to meet them! And not one of you would dare to carry them a message." She stamped her foot. "I hoped you might have met the hunchback at Écouen," she said to Chiverni. "He has brains."

"He was there, madame," replied Chiverni, "but he could not induce the Connétable to join him. Monsieur de Montmorency would be glad enough to overthrow the Guises, who obtained his dismissal; but he will have nothing to do with heresy."

"And who, gentlemen, is to crush these private whims that are an offence to Royalty? By Heaven! these nobles must be made to destroy each other—as Louis XI. made them, the greatest of your kings. In this kingdom there are four or five parties, and my son's is the weakest of them all."

"The Reformation is an idea," remarked Charles de Gondi, "and the parties crushed by Louis the Eleventh were based only on interest."

"There is always an idea to back up interest," replied Chiverni. "In Louis XI.'s time the idea was called the Great Fief!"

"Use heresy as an axe," said Albert de Gondi. "You will not incur the odium of executions."

"Ha!" said the Queen, "but I know nothing of the strength or the schemes of these folks, and I cannot communicate with them through any safe channel. If I were found out in any such conspiracy, either by the Queen, who watches me as if I were an infant in arms, or by my two jailers, who let no one come into the château, I should be banished from the country, and taken back to Florence under a formidable escort captained by some ruffianly Guisard! Thank you, friends!—Oh, daughter-in-law! I hope you may some day be a prisoner in your own house; then you will know what you have inflicted on me!"

"Their schemes!" exclaimed Chiverni. "The Grand Master and the Cardinal know them; but those two foxes will not tell. If you, madame, can make them tell, I will devote myself to you, and come to an understanding with the Prince de Condé."

"Which of their plans have they failed to conceal from you?" asked the Queen, glancing towards the brothers de Guise.

"Monsieur de Vieilleville and Monsieur de Saint-André have just had their orders, of which we know nothing; but the Grand Master is concentrating his best troops on the left bank, it would seem. Within a few days you will find yourself at Amboise. The Grand Master came to this terrace

to study the position, and he does not think Blois favorable to his private schemes. Well, then, what does he want?" said Chiverni, indicating the steep cliffs that surround the château. "The Court could nowhere be safer from sudden attack than it is here."

"Abdicate or govern," said Albert de Gondi in the Queen's ear as she stood thinking.

A fearful expression of suppressed rage flashed across the Queen's handsome ivory-pale face.—She was not yet forty, and she had lived for twenty-six years in the French Court, absolutely powerless, she, who ever since she had come there had longed to play the leading part.

"Never so long as this son lives! His wife has bewitched him!"

After a short pause these terrible words broke from her in the language of Dante.

Catherine's exclamation had its inspiration in a strange prediction, spoken a few days before at the Château of Chaumont, on the opposite bank of the Loire, whither she had gone with her astrologer Ruggieri to consult a famous soothsayer. This woman was brought to meet her by Nostradamus, the chief of those physicians who in that great sixteenth century believed in the occult sciences, with Ruggieri, Cardan, Paracelsus, and many more. This fortune-teller, of whose life history has no record, had fixed the reign of Francis II. at one year's duration.

"And what is your opinion of all this?" Catherine asked Chiverni.

"There will be fighting," said the cautious gentleman. "The King of Navarre——"

"Oh! say the Queen!" Catherine put in.

"Very true, the Queen," said Chiverni, smiling, "has made the Prince de Condé the chief of the reformed party; he, as a younger son, may dare much; and Monsieur le Cardinal talks of sending for him to come here."

"If only he comes!" cried the Queen, "I am saved!"

So it will be seen that the leaders of the great Reforming

movement had been right in thinking of Catherine as an ally.

"This is the jest of it," said the Queen; "the Bourbons are tricking the Huguenots, and Master Calvin, de Bèze, and the rest are cheating the Bourbons; but shall we be strong enough to take in the Huguenots, the Bourbons, and the Guises? In front of three such foes we are justified in feeling our pulse," said she.

"They have not the King," replied Albert. "You must always win, having the King on your side."

"*Maladetta Maria!*" said Catherine, between her teeth.

"The Guises are already thinking of diverting the affections of the middle class," said Birague.

The hope of snatching the Crown had not been premeditated by the two heads of the refractory House of Guise; there was nothing to justify the project or the hope; circumstances suggested such audacity. The two Cardinals and the two *Balafrés* were, as it happened, four ambitious men, superior in political gifts to any of the men about them. Indeed, the family was only subdued at last by Henri IV., himself a leader of faction, brought up in the great school of which Catherine and the Guises were the teachers—and he had profited by their lessons.

At this time these two brothers were the arbiters of the greatest revolution attempted in Europe since that carried through in England under Henry VIII., which had resulted from the invention of printing. They were the enemies of the Reformation, the power was in their hands, and they meant to stamp out heresy; but Calvin, their opponent, though less famous than Luther, was a stronger man. Calvin saw Government where Luther had only seen Dogma. Where the burly, beer-drinking, uxorious German fought with the Devil, flinging his inkstand at the fiend, the man of Picardy, frail and unmarried, dreamed of plans of campaign, of directing battles, of arming princes, and of raising whole nations by disseminating republican doctrines in the hearts of

the middle classes, so as to make up, by increased progress in the Spirit of Nations, for his constant defeats on the battle-field.

The Cardinal de Lorraine and the Duc de Guise knew quite as well as Philip II. and the Duke of Alva where the Monarchy was aimed at, and how close the connection was between Catholicism and sovereignty. Charles V., intoxicated with having drunk too deeply of Charlemagne's cup, and trusting too much in the strength of his rule, for he believed that he and Soliman might divide the world between them, was not at first conscious that his front was attacked; as soon as Cardinal Granvelle showed him the extent of the festering sore, he abdicated.

The Guises had a startling conception; they would extinguish heresy with a single blow. They tried to strike that blow for the first time at Amboise, and they made a second attempt on Saint-Bartholomew's Day; this time they were in accord with Catherine de' Medici, enlightened as she was by the flames of twelve years' wars, and yet more by the ominous word "Republic" spoken and even published at a later date by the writers of the Reformation, whose ideas Lecamus, the typical citizen of Paris, had already understood. The two Princes, on the eve of striking a fatal blow to the heart of the nobility, in order to cut it off from the first from a religious party whose triumph would be its ruin, were now discussing the means of announcing their *Coup d'État* to the King, while Catherine was conversing with her four counselors.

"Jeanne d'Albret knew what she was doing when she proclaimed herself the protectress of the Huguenots! She has in the Reformation a battering-ram which she makes good play with!" said the Grand Master, who had measured the depth of the Queen of Navarre's scheming.

Jeanne d'Albret was, in point of fact, one of the cleverest personages of her time.

"Théodore de Bèze is at Nérac, having taken Calvin's orders."

"What men those common folk can lay their hands on!" cried the Duke.

"Ay, we have not a man on our side to match that fellow la Renaudie," said the Cardinal. "He is a perfect Catiline."

"Men like him always act on their own account," replied the Duke. "Did not I see la Renaudie's value? I loaded him with favors. I helped him to get away when he was condemned by the Bourgogne Parlement, I got him back into France by obtaining a revision of his trial, and I intended to do all I could for him, while he was plotting a diabolical conspiracy against us. The rascal has effected an alliance between the German Protestants and the heretics in France by smoothing over the discrepancies of dogma between Luther and Calvin. He has won over the disaffected nobles to the cause of the Reformation without asking them to abjure Catholicism. So long ago as last year he had thirty commanders on his side! He was everywhere at once: at Lyons, in Languedoc, at Nantes. Finally, he drew up the Articles settled in Council and distributed throughout Germany, in which theologians declare that it is justifiable to use force to get the King out of our hands, and this is being disseminated in every town. Look for him where you will, you will nowhere find him!

"Hitherto I have shown him nothing but kindness! We shall have to kill him like a dog, or to make a bridge of gold for him to cross and come into our house."

"Brittany and Languedoc, the whole kingdom indeed, is being worked upon to give us a deadly shock," said the Cardinal. "After yesterday's festival, I spent the rest of the night in reading all the information sent me by my priesthood; but no one is involved but some impoverished gentlemen and artisans, people who may be either hanged or left alive, it matters not which. The Colignys and the Condés are not yet visible, though they hold the threads of the conspiracy."

"Ay," said the Duke; "and as soon as that lawyer Avenelles had let the cat out of the bag, I told Braguelonne to

give the conspirators their head: they have no suspicions, they think they can surprise us, and then perhaps the leaders will show themselves. My advice would be that we should allow ourselves to be beaten for forty-eight hours——"

"That would be half-an-hour too long," said the Cardinal in alarm.

"How brave you are!" retorted la Balafré.

The Cardinal went on with calm indifference:

"Whether the Prince de Condé be implicated or no, if we are assured that he is the leader, cut off his head. What we want for that business is judges rather than soldiers, and there will never be any lack of judges! Victory in the Supreme Court is always more certain than on the field of battle, and costs less."

"I am quite willing," replied the Duke. "But do you believe that the Prince de Condé is powerful enough to inspire such audacity in those who are sent on first to attack us? Is there not——?"

"The King of Navarre," said the Cardinal.

"A gaby who bows low in my presence," replied the Duke. "That Florentine woman's graces have blinded you, I think——"

"Oh, I have thought of that already," said the prelate. "If I aim at a gallant intimacy with her, is it not that I may read to the bottom of her heart?"

"She has no heart," said his brother sharply. "She is even more ambitious than we are."

"You are a brave commander," said the Cardinal; "but take my word for it, our skirts are very near touching, and I made Mary Stuart watch her narrowly before you ever suspected her. Catherine has no more religion in her than my shoe. If she is not the soul of the conspiracy, it is not for lack of goodwill; but we will draw her out and see how far she will support us. Till now I know for certain that she has not held any communication with the heretics."

"It is time that we should lay everything before the King, and the Queen-mother, who knows nothing," said the Duke.

"and that is the only proof of her innocence. La Renaudie will understand from my arrangements that we are warned. Last night Nemours must have been following up the detachments of the Reformed party, who were coming in by the cross-roads, and the conspirators will be compelled to attack us at Amboise; I will let them all in.—Here," and he pointed to the three steep slopes of rock on which the Château de Blois is built, just as Chiverni had done a moment since, "we should have a fight with no result; the Huguenots could come and go at will. Blois is a hall with four doors, while Amboise is a sack."

"I will not leave the Florentine Queen," said the Cardinal.

"We have made one mistake," remarked the Duke, playing with his dagger, tossing it in the air, and catching it again by the handle; "we ought to have behaved to her as to the Reformers, giving her liberty to move, so as to take her in the act."

The Cardinal looked at his brother for a minute, shaking his head.

"What does Pardaillan want?" the Duke exclaimed, seeing this young gentleman coming along the terrace. Pardaillan was to become famous for his fight with la Renaudie, in which both were killed.

"Monseigneur, a youth sent here by the Queen's furrier is at the gate, and says that he has a set of ermine to deliver to Her Majesty. Is he to be admitted?"

"To be sure; an ermine surcoat she spoke of but yesterday," said the Cardinal. "Let the shop-clerk in. She will need the mantle for her journey by the Loire."

"Which way did he come, that he was not stopped before reaching the gate?" asked the Grand Master.

"I do not know," said Pardaillan.

"I will go to see him in the Queen's rooms," said la Balafré. "Tell him to await her *lever* in the guard-room. But, Pardaillan, is he young?"

"Yes, Monseigneur; he says he is Lecamus' son."

"Lecamus is a good Catholic," said the Cardinal, who, like

the Duke, was gifted with a memory like Cæsar's. "The priest of Saint-Pierre aux Bœufs trusts him, for he is officer of the peace for the Palace."

"Make this youth chat with the Captain of the Scotch Guard, all the same," said the Grand Master, with an emphasis which gave the words a very pointed meaning. "But Ambroise is at the château; through him we shall know at once if he really is the son of Lecamus, who was formerly his very good friend. Ask for Ambroise Paré."

At this moment the Queen came towards the brothers, who hurried to meet her with marks of respect, in which Catherine never failed to discern deep irony.

"Gentlemen," said she, "will you condescend to inform me of what is going on? Is the widow of your late sovereign of less account in your esteem than Messieurs de Vieilleville, Birague, and Chiverni?"

"Madame," said the Cardinal, with an air of gallantry, "our first duty as men, before all matters of politics, is not to alarm ladies by false rumors. This morning, indeed, we have had occasion to confer on State affairs. You will pardon my brother for having in the first instance given orders on purely military matters which must be indifferent to you—the really important points remain to be discussed. If you approve, we will all attend the *lever* of the King and Queen; it is close on the hour."

"Why, what is happening, Monsieur le Grand Maître?" asked Catherine, affecting terror.

"The Reformation, madame, is no longer a mere heresy; it is a party which is about to take up arms and seize the King."

Catherine, with the Cardinal, the Duke, and the gentlemen, made their way towards the staircase by the corridor, which was crowded with courtiers who had not the right of *entrée*, and who ranged themselves against the wall.

Gondi, who had been studying the Princes of Lorraine while Catherine was conversing with them, said in good Tuscan and in Catherine's ear these two words, which became

bywords, and which express one aspect of that royally powerful nature:

"Odiate e aspettate!" Hate and wait.

Pardaillan, who had delivered to the officer on guard at the gatehouse the order to admit the messenger from the Queen's furrier, found Christophe standing outside the portico and staring at the façade built by good King Louis XII., whereon there was at that time an even more numerous array of sculptured figures of the coarsest buffoonery—if we may judge by what has survived. The curious will detect, for instance, a figure of a woman carved on the capital of one of the columns of the gateway holding up her skirts, and saucily exhibiting "what Brunel displayed to Marphise" to a burly monk crouching in the capital of the corresponding column at the other jamb of this gate, above which once stood a statue of Louis XII. Several of the windows of this front, ornamented in this grotesque taste, and now unfortunately destroyed, amused, or seemed to amuse, Christophe, whom the gunners of the Guard were already pelting with their pleasantries.

"He would like to be lodged there, he would," said the sergeant-at-arms, patting his store of charges for his musket, which hung from his belt in the sugar-loaf-shaped cartridges.

"Hallo, you from Paris, you never saw so much before!" said a soldier.

"He recognizes good King Louis!" said another.

Christophe affected not to hear them, and tried to look even more helplessly amazed, so that his look of blank stupidity was an excellent recommendation to Pardaillan.

"The Queen is not yet risen," said the young officer. "Come and wait in the guardroom."

Christophe slowly followed Pardaillan. He purposely lingered to admire the pretty covered balcony with an arched front, where, in the reign of Louis XII., the courtiers could wait under cover till the hour of reception if the weather was bad, and where at this moment some of the gentlemen attached to the Guises were grouped; for the staircase, still

so well preserved, which led to their apartments is at the end of that gallery, in a tower of which the architecture is greatly admired by the curious.

"Now, then! have you come here to study graven images?" cried Pardaillan, seeing Lecamus riveted in front of the elegant stonework of the outer parapet which unites—or if you will, separates—the columns of each archway.

Christophe followed the young captain to the grand staircase, not without glancing at this almost Moorish-looking structure from top to bottom with an expression of ecstasy. On this fine morning the court was full of captains-at-arms and of courtiers chatting in groups; and their brilliant costumes gave life to the scene, in itself so bright, for the marvels of architecture that decorated the façade were still quite new.

"Come in here," said Pardaillan to Lecamus, signing to him to follow him through the carved door on the second floor, which was thrown open by a sentry on his recognizing Pardaillan.

Christophe's amazement may easily be imagined on entering this guardroom, so vast, that the military genius of our day has cut it across by a partition to form two rooms. It extends, in fact, both on the second floor, where the King lived, and on the first, occupied by the Queen-mother, for a third of the length of the front towards the court, and is lighted by two windows to the left and two to the right of the famous staircase. The young captain made his way toward the door leading to the King's room, which opened out of this hall, and desired one of the pages-in-waiting to tell Madame Dayelle, one of the Queen's ladies, that the furrier was in the guardroom with her surcoats.

At a sign from Pardaillan, Christophe went to stand by the side of an officer seated on a low stool in the corner of a chimney-place as large as his father's shop, at one end of this vast hall opposite another exactly like it at the other end. In talking with this gentleman, Christophe succeeded in interesting him by telling him the trivial details of his trade:

and he seemed so completely the craftsman, that the officer volunteered this opinion to the captain of the Scotch Guard, who came in to cross-question the lad while scrutinizing him closely out of the corner of his eye.

Though Christophe Lecamus had had ample warning, he still did not understand the cold ferocity of the interested parties between whom Chaudieu had bid him stand. To an observer who should have mastered the secrets of the drama, as the historian knows them now, it would have seemed terrible to see this young fellow, the hope of two families, risking his life between two such powerful and pitiless machines as Catherine and the Guises. But how few brave hearts ever know the extent of their danger! From the way in which the quays of the city and the château were guarded, Christophe had expected to find snares and spies at every step, so he determined to conceal the importance of his errand and the agitation of his mind under the stupid tradesman's stare, which he had put on before Pardaillan, the officer of the Guard, and the captain.

The stir which in a royal residence attends the rising of the King began to be perceptible. The nobles, leaving their horses with their pages or grooms in the outer court, for no one but the King and Queen was allowed to enter the inner court on horseback, were mounting the splendid stairs in twos and threes and filling the guardroom, a large room with two fireplaces—where the huge mantels are now bereft of adornment, where squalid red tiles have taken the place of the fine mosaic flooring, where royal hangings covered the rough walls now daubed with whitewash, and where every art of an age unique in its splendor was displayed at its best.

Catholics and Protestants poured in as much to hear the news and study each other's faces as to pay their court to the King. His passionate affection for Mary Stuart, which neither the Queen-mother nor the Guises attempted to check, and Mary's politic submissiveness in yielding to it, deprived the King of all power; indeed, though he was now seventeen, he knew nothing of Royalty but its indulgences, and of mar-

riage nothing but the raptures of first love. In point of fact, everybody tried to ingratiate himself with Queen Mary and her uncles, the Cardinal de Lorraine and the Grand Master of the Household.

All this bustle went on under the eyes of Christophe, who watched each fresh arrival with very natural excitement. A magnificent curtain, on each side of it a page and a yeoman of the Scotch Guard then on duty, showed him the entrance to that royal chamber, destined to be fatal to the son of the Grand Master, for the younger Balafré fell dead at the foot of the bed now occupied by Mary Stuart and Francis II. The Queen's ladies occupied the chimney-place opposite to that where Christophe was still chatting with the captain of the Guard. This fireplace, by its position, was the seat of honor, for it is built into the thick wall of the council-room, between the door into the royal chamber and that into the council-room, so that the ladies and gentlemen who had a right to sit there were close to where the King and the Queens must pass. The courtiers were certain to see Catherine; for her maids of honor, in mourning, like the rest of the Court, came up from her rooms conducted by the Countess Fieschi, and took their place on the side next the council-room, facing those of the young Queen, who, led by the Duchesse de Guise, took the opposite angle next the royal bed-chamber.

Between the courtiers and the young ladies, all belonging to the first families in the kingdom, a space was kept of some few paces, which none but the greatest nobles were permitted to cross. The Countess Fieschi and the Duchesse de Guise were allowed by right of office to be seated in the midst of their noble charges, who all remained standing.

One of the first to mingle with these dangerous bevies was the Duc de Orléans, the King's brother, who came down from his rooms above, attended by his tutor, Monsieur de Cypierre. This young Prince, who was destined to reign before the end of the year, under the name of Charles IX., at the age of ten was excessively shy. The Duc d'Anjou and

the Duc d'Alençon, his two brothers, and the infant Princess Marguerite, who became the wife of Henri IV., were still too young to appear at Court, and remained in their mother's apartments. The Duc d'Orléans, richly dressed in the fashion of the time, in silk trunk hose, a doublet of cloth of gold, brocaded with flowers in black, and a short cloak of embroidered velvet, all black, for he was still in mourning for the late King his father, bowed to the two elder ladies, and joined the group of his mother's maids of honor. Strongly disliking the Guisards (the adherents of the Guises), he replied coldly to the Duchess' greeting, and went to lean his elbow on the back of the Countess Fieschi's tall chair.

His tutor, Monsieur de Cypierre, one of the finest characters of that age, stood behind him as a shield. Amyot, in a simple abbé's gown, also attended the Prince; he was his instructor as well as being the teacher of the three other royal children, whose favor was afterwards so advantageous to him.

Between this chimney-place "of honor" and that at the further end of the hall—where the Guards stood in groups with their captain, a few courtiers, and Christophe carrying his box—the Chancellor Olivier, l'Hôpital's patron and predecessor, in the costume worn ever since by the Chancellors of France, was walking to and fro with Cardinal de Tournon, who had just arrived from Rome, and with whom he exchanged a few phrases in murmurs. On them was centered the general attention of the gentlemen packed against the wall dividing the hall from the King's bedroom, standing like a living tapestry against the rich figured hangings. In spite of the serious state of affairs, the Court presented the same appearance as every Court must, in every country, at every time, and in the midst of the greatest perils. Courtiers always talk of the most trivial subjects while thinking of the gravest, jesting while watching every physiognomy, and considering questions of love and marriage with heiresses in the midst of the most sanguinary catastrophes.

"What did you think of yesterday's fête?" asked Bour-

deilles, the Lord of Brantôme, going up to Mademoiselle de Piennes, one of the elder Queen's maids of honor.

"Monsieur du Baïf and Monsieur du Bellay had had the most charming ideas," said she, pointing to the two gentlemen who had arranged everything, and who were standing close at hand. "I thought it in atrocious taste," she added in a whisper.

"You had no part in it?" said Miss Lewiston from the other side.

"What are you reading, madame?" said Amyot to Madame Fieschi.

"*Amadis de Gaule,* by the Seigneur des Essarts, purveyor-in-ordinary to the King's Artillery."

"A delightful work," said the handsome girl, who became famous as la Fosseuse, when she was lady-in-waiting to Queen Margaret of Navarre.

"The style is quite new," remarked Amyot. "Shall you adopt such barbarisms?" he asked, turning to Brantôme.

"The ladies like it! What is to be said?" cried Brantôme, going forward to bow to Madame de Guise, who had in her hand Boccaccio's *Famous Ladies.* "There must be some ladies of your House there, madame," said he. "But Master Boccaccio's mistake was that he did not live in these days; he would have found ample matter to enlarge his volumes."

"How clever Monsieur de Brantôme is!" said the beautiful Mademoiselle de Limeuil to the Countess Fieschi. "He came first to us, but he will stay with the Guises."

"Hush!" said Madame Fieschi, looking at the fair Limeuil. "Attend to what concerns you——"

The young lady turned to the door. She was expecting Sardini, an Italian nobleman, whom, subsequently, she made marry her after a little accident that overtook her in the Queen's dressing-room, and which procured her the honor of having a queen for her midwife.

"By Saint Alipantin, Mademoiselle Davila seems to grow prettier every morning," said Monsieur de Robertet, Secretary of State, as he bowed to the Queen-mother's ladies.

The advent of the Secretary of State, though he was exactly as important as a Cabinet Minister in these days, made no sensation whatever.

"If you think that, monsieur, do lend me the epigram against Messieurs de Guise; I know you have it," said Mademoiselle Davila to Robertet.

"I have it no longer," replied the Secretary, going across to speak to Madame de Guise.

"I have it," said the Comte de Grammont to Mademoiselle Davila; "but I will lend it you on only one condition."

"On condition——? For shame!" said Madame Fieschi.

"You do not know what I want," replied Grammont.

"Oh, that is easy to guess," said la Limeuil.

The Italian custom of calling ladies, as French peasants call their wives, *la* Such-an-one, was at that time the fashion at the Court of France.

"You are mistaken," the Count replied eagerly; "what I ask is, that a letter should be delivered to Mademoiselle de Matha, one of the maids on the other side—a letter from my cousin de Jarnac."

"Do not compromise my maids; I will give it her myself," said the Countess Fieschi. "Have you heard any news of what is going on in Flanders?" she asked Cardinal de Tournon. "Monsieur d'Egmont is at some new pranks, it would seem."

"He and the Prince of Orange," said Cypierre, with a highly expressive shrug.

"The Duke of Alva and Cardinal de Granvelle are going there, are they not, monsieur?" asked Amyot of Cardinal de Tournon, who stood, uneasy and gloomy, between the two groups after his conversation with the Chancellor.

"We, happily, are quiet, and have to defy heresy only on the stage," said the young Duke, alluding to the part he had played the day before, that of a Knight subduing a Hydra with the word "Reformation" on its brow.

Catherine de' Medici, agreeing on this point with her daughter-in-law, had allowed a theatre to be constructed

in the great hall, which was subsequently used for the meetings of the States at Blois, the hall between the buildings of Louis XII. and those of Francis I.

The Cardinal made no reply, and resumed his walk in the middle of the hall, talking in a low voice to Monsieur de Robertet and the Chancellor. Many persons know nothing of the difficulties that Secretaryships of State, now transformed into Cabinet Ministries, met with in the course of their establishment, and how hard the Kings of France found it to create them. At that period a Secretary like Robertet was merely a clerk, of hardly any account among the princes and magnates who settled the affairs of State. There were at that time no ministerial functionaries but the Superintendent of Finance, the Chancellor, and the Keeper of the King's Seals. The King granted a seat in the Council, by letters patent, to such of his subjects as might, in his opinion, give useful advice in the conduct of public affairs. A seat in the Council might be given to a president of a law court in the Parlement, to a bishop, to an untitled favorite. Once admitted to the Council, the subject strengthened his position by getting himself appointed to one of the Crown offices to which a salary was attached—the government of a province, a constable's sword, a marshal's baton, the command of the Artillery, the post of High Admiral, the colonelcy of some military corps, the captaincy of the galleys—or often some function at Court, such as that of Grand Master of the Household, then held by the Duc de Guise.

"Do you believe that the Duc de Nemours will marry Françoise?" asked Madame de Guise of the Duc d'Orléans' instructor.

"Indeed, madame, I know nothing but Latin," was the reply.

This made those smile who were near enough to hear it. Just then the seduction of Françoise de Rohan by the Duc de Nemours was the theme of every conversation; but as the Duc de Nemours was cousin to the King, and also allied to the House of Valois through his mother, the Guises re-

garded him as seduced rather than as a seducer. The influence of the House of Rohan was, however, so great, that after Francis II.'s death the Duc de Nemours was obliged to quit France in consequence of the lawsuit brought against him by the Rohans, which was compromised by the offices of the Guises. His marriage to the Duchesse de Guise, after Poltrot's assassination, may account for the Duchess' question to Amyot, by explaining some rivalry, no doubt, between her and Mademoiselle de Rohan.

"Look, pray, at that party of malcontents," said the Comte de Grammont, pointing to Messieurs de Coligny, Cardinal de Châtillon, Danville, Thoré, Moret, and several other gentlemen suspected of meddling in the Reformation, who were standing all together between two windows at the lower end of the hall.

"The Huguenots are on the move," said Cypierre. "We know that Théodore de Bèze is at Nérac to persuade the Queen of Navarre to declare herself on their side by publicly renouncing the Catholic faith," he added, with a glance at the Bailli d'Orléans, who was Chancellor to the Queen of Navarre, and a keen observer of the Court.

"She will do it," said the Bailli d'Orléans drily.

This personage, the Jacques Cœur of his day, and one of the richest middle-class men of his time, was named Groslot, and was envoy from Jeanne d'Albret to the French Court.

"Do you think so?" said the Chancellor of France to the Chancellor of Navarre, quite understanding the full import of Groslot's remark.

"Don't you know," said the rich provincial, "that the Queen of Navarre has nothing of the woman in her but her sex? She is devoted to none but manly things; her mind is strong in important matters, and her heart undaunted by the greatest adversities."

"Monsieur le Cardinal," said the Chancellor Olivier to Monsieur de Tournon, who had heard Groslot, "what do you think of such boldness?"

"The Queen of Navarre does well to choose for her Chan-

cellor a man from whom the House of Lorraine will need to borrow, and who offers the King his house when there is a talk of moving to Orleans," replied the Cardinal.

The Chancellor and the Cardinal looked at each other, not daring to speak their thoughts; but Robertet expressed them, for he thought it necessary to make a greater display of devotion to the Guises than these great men, since he was so far beneath them.

"It is most unfortunate that the House of Navarre, instead of abjuring the faith of their fathers, do not abjure the spirit of revenge and rebellion inspired by the Connétable de Bourbon. We shall see a repetition of the wars of the Armagnacs and the Bourguignons."

"No," said Groslot, "for there is something of Louis XI. in the Cardinal de Lorraine."

"And in Queen Catherine too," observed Robertet.

At this moment Madame Dayelle, Mary Stuart's favorite waiting-woman, crossed the room, and went to the Queen's chamber. The appearance of the waiting-woman made a little stir.

"We shall be admitted directly," said Madame Fieschi.

"I do not think so," said the Duchesse de Guise. "Their Majesties will come out, for a State Council is to be held."

La Dayelle slipped into the royal chamber after scratching at the door, a deferential custom introduced by Catherine de' Medici, and adopted by the French Court.

"What is the weather like, my dear Dayelle?" asked Queen Mary, putting her fair fresh face out between the curtains.

"Oh! madame——"

"What is the matter, Dayelle? You might have the bowmen at your heels——"

"Oh! madame—is the King still sleeping?"

"Yes."

"We are to leave the castle, and Monsieur le Cardinal desired me to tell you so, that you might suggest it to the King."

"Do you know why, my good Dayelle?"

"The Reformers mean to carry you off."

"Oh, this new religion leaves me no peace! I dreamed last night that I was in prison—I who shall wear the united crowns of the three finest kingdoms in the world."

"Indeed! but, madame, it was only a dream."

"Carried off! That would be rather amusing.—But for the sake of religion, and by heretics—horrible!"

The Queen sprang out of bed and seated herself in front of the fireplace in a large chair covered with red velvet, after wrapping herself in a loose black velvet gown handed to her by Dayelle, which she tied about the waist with a silken cord. Dayelle lighted the fire, for the early May mornings are cool on the banks of the Loire.

"Then did my uncles get this news in the course of the night?" the Queen inquired of Dayelle, with whom she was on familiar terms.

"Early this morning Messieurs de Guise were walking on the terrace to avoid being overheard, and received there some messengers arriving in hot haste from various parts of the kingdom where the Reformers are busy. Her Highness the Queen-mother went out with her Italians hoping to be consulted, but she was not invited to join the council."

"She must be furious."

"All the more so because she had a little wrath left over from yesterday," replied Dayelle. "They say she was far from rejoiced by the sight of your Majesty in your dress of woven gold and your pretty veil of tan-colored crape——"

"Leave us now, my good Dayelle; the King is waking. Do not let any one in, not even those who have the *entrée*. There are matters of State in hand, and my uncles will not disturb us."

"Why, my dear Mary, are you out of bed already? Is it daylight?" said the young King, rousing himself.

"My dear love, while we were sleeping, malignants have been wide awake, and compel us to leave this pleasant home."

"What do you mean by malignants, my sweetheart? Did we not have the most delightful festival last evening but for

the Latin which those gentlemen insisted on dropping into our good French?"

"Oh!" said Mary, "that is in the best taste, and Rabelais brought Latin into fashion."

"Ah! you are so learned, and I am only sorry not to be able to do you honor in verse. If I were not King, I would take back Master Amyot from my brother, who is being made so wise——"

"You have nothing to envy your brother for; he writes verses and shows them to me, begging me to show him mine. Be content, you are by far the best of the four, and will be as good a king as you are a charming lover. Indeed, that perhaps is the reason your mother loves you so little. But be easy; I, dear heart, will love you for all the world."

"It is no great merit in me to love such a perfect Queen," said the young King. "I do not know what hindered me from embracing you before the whole Court last night, when you danced the *branle* with tapers. I could see how all the women looked serving-wenches by you, my sweet Marie!"

"For plain prose your language is charming, my dear heart: it is love that speaks, to be sure. And, you know, my dear, that if you were but a poor little page, I should still love you just as much as I now do, and yet it is a good thing to be able to say, 'My sweetheart is a King!'"

"Such a pretty arm! Why must we get dressed? I like to push my fingers through your soft hair and tangle your golden curls. Listen, pretty one; I will not allow you to let your women kiss your fair neck and your pretty shoulders any more! I am jealous of the Scotch mists for having touched them."

"Will you not come to see my beloved country? The Scotch would love you, and there would be no rebellions, as there 'are here."

"Who rebels in our kingdom?" said François de Valois, wrapping himself in his gown, and drawing his wife on to his knee.

"Yes, this is very pretty play," said she, withdrawing her

cheek from his kiss. "But you have to reign, if you please, my liege."

"Who talks of reigning?—This morning I want to——"

"Need you say 'I want to,' when you can do what you will?—That is the language of neither king nor lover. However, that is not the matter on hand—we have important business to attend to."

"Oh!" said the King, "it is a long time since we have had any business to do.—Is it amusing?"

"Not at all," said Mary; "we must make a move."

"I will wager, my pretty one, that you have seen one of your uncles, who manage matters so well that, at seventeen, I am a King only in name. I really know not why, since the first Council, I have ever sat at one; they could do everything quite as well by setting a crown on my chair; I see everything through their eyes, and settle matters blindfold."

"Indeed, monsieur," said the Queen, standing up and assuming an air of annoyance, "you had agreed never again to give me the smallest trouble on that score, but to leave my uncles to exercise your royal power for the happiness of your people. A nice people they are! Why, if you tried to govern them unaided, they would swallow you whole like a strawberry. They need warriors to rule them—a stern master gloved with iron; while you—you are a charmer whom I love just as you are, and should not love if you were different---do you hear, my lord?" she added, bending down to kiss the boy, who seemed inclined to rebel against this speech, but who was mollified by the caress.

"Oh, if only they were not your uncles!" cried Francis. "I cannot endure that Cardinal; and when he puts on his insinuating air and his submissive ways, and says to me with a bow, 'Sire, the honor of the Crown and the faith of your fathers is at stake, your Majesty will never allow——' and this and that—I am certain he toils for nothing but his cursed House of Lorraine."

"How well you mimic him!" cried the Queen. "But why do you not make these Guises inform you of what is going

forward, so as to govern by and by on your own account when you are of full age? I am your wife, and your honor is mine. We will reign, sweetheart—never fear! But all will not be roses for us till we are free to please ourselves. There is nothing so hard for a King as to govern!

"Am I the Queen now, I ask you? Do you think that your mother ever fails to repay me in evil for what good my uncles may do for the glory of your throne? And mark the difference! My uncles are great princes, descendants of Charlemagne, full of goodwill, and ready to die for you; while this daughter of a leech, or a merchant, Queen of France by a mere chance, is as shrewish as a citizen's wife who is not mistress in her house. The Italian woman is provoked that she cannot set every one by the ears, and she is always coming to me with her pale, solemn face, and then with her pinched lips she begins: 'Daughter, you are the Queen; I am only the second lady in the kingdom'—she is furious, you see, dear heart—'but if I were in your place, I would not wear crimson velvet while the Court is in mourning, and I would appear in public with my hair plainly dressed and with no jewels, for what is unseemly in any lady is even more so in a queen. Nor would I dance myself; I would only see others dance!' That is the kind of thing she says to me."

"Oh, dear Heaven!" cried the King, "I can hear her! Mercy, if she only knew——"

"Why, you still quake before her. She wearies you—say so? We will send her away. By my faith, that she should deceive you might be endured, but to be so tedious——"

"In Heaven's name, be silent, Marie," said the King, at once alarmed and delighted. "I would not have you lose her favor."

"Never fear that she will quarrel with me, with the three finest crowns in the world on my head, my little King," said Mary Stuart. "Even though she hates me for a thousand reasons, she flatters me, to win me from my uncles."

"Hates you?"

"Yes, my angel! And if I had not a thousand such proofs as women can give each other, and such as women only can understand, her persistent opposition to our happy love-making would be enough. Now, is it my fault if your father could never endure Mademoiselle de' Medici? In short, she likes me so little, that you had to be quite in a rage to prevent our having separate sets of rooms here and at Saint-Germain. She declared that it was customary for the Kings and Queens of France. Customary!—It was your father's custom; that is quite intelligible. As to your grandfather, Francis, the good man established the practice for the convenience of his love affairs. So be on your guard; if we are obliged to leave this place, do not let the Grand Master divide us."

"If we leave? But I do not intend to leave this pretty château, whence we see the Loire and all the country around —a town at our feet, the brightest sky in the world above us, and these lovely gardens. Or if I go, it will be to travel with you in Italy and see Raphael's pictures and Saint-Peter's at Rome."

"And the orange-trees. Ah, sweet little King, if you could know how your Mary longs to walk under orange-trees in flower and fruit! Alas! I may never see one! Oh! to hear an Italian song under those fragrant groves, on the shore of a blue sea, under a cloudless sky, and to clasp each other thus!——"

"Let us be off," said the King.

"Be off!" cried the Grand Master, coming in. "Yes, Sire, you must be off from Blois. Pardon my boldness; but circumstances overrule etiquette, and I have come to beg you to call a Council."

Mary and Francis had started apart on being thus taken by surprise, and they both wore the same expression of offended sovereign Majesty.

"You are too much the Grand Master, Monsieur de Guise," said the young King, suppressing his wrath.

"Devil take lovers!" muttered the Cardinal in Catherine's ear.

"My son," replied the Queen-mother, appearing behind the Cardinal, "the safety of your person is at stake as well as of your kingdom."

"Heresy was awake while you slept, Sire," said the Cardinal.

"Withdraw into the hall," said the little King; "we will hold a Council."

"Madame," said the Duke to the Queen, "your furrier's son has come with some furs which are seasonable for your journey, as we shall probably ride by the Loire.—But he also wishes to speak with madame," he added, turning to the Queen-mother. "While the King is dressing, would you and Her Majesty dismiss him forthwith, so that this trifle may no further trouble us."

"With pleasure," replied Catherine; adding to herself, "If he thinks to be rid of me by such tricks, he little knows me."

The Cardinal and the Duke retired, leaving the two Queens with the King. As he went through the guardroom to go to the council-chamber, the Grand Master desired the usher to bring up the Queen's furrier.

When Christophe saw this official coming towards him from one end of the room to the other, he took him, from his dress, to be some one of importance, and his heart sank within him; but this sensation, natural enough at the approach of a critical moment, became sheer terror when the usher, whose advance had the effect of directing the eyes of the whole splendid assembly to Christophe with his bundles and his abject looks, said to him:

"Their Highnesses the Cardinal de Lorraine and the Grand Master desire to speak to you in the council-room."

"Has any one betrayed me?" was the thought of this hapless envoy of the Reformers.

Christophe followed the usher, his eyes bent on the ground, and never looked up till he found himself in the spacious council-room—as large almost as the guardroom. The two

Guises were alone, standing in front of the splendid chimney-place that backed against that in the guardroom, where the maids of honor were grouped.

"You have come from Paris? Which road did you take?" the Cardinal said to Christophe.

"I came by water, monseigneur," replied the lad.

"And how did you get into Blois?" said the Grand Master.

"By the river port, monseigneur."

"And no one interfered with you?" said the Duke, who was examining the young man closely.

"No, monseigneur. I told the first soldier, who made as though he would stop me, that I had come on duty to wait on the two Queens, and that my father is furrier to their Majesties."

"What is doing in Paris?" asked the Cardinal.

"They are still trying to discover the murderer who killed President Minard."

"Are not you the son of my surgeon's greatest friend?" asked the Duc de Guise, deceived by Christophe's expression of candor, now that his fears were allayed.

"Yes, monseigneur."

The Grand Master went out, hastily lifted the curtain which screened the double doors of the council-chamber, and showed his face to the crowd, among whom he looked for the King's surgeon-in-chief. Ambroise Paré, standing in a corner, was aware of a glance shot at him by the Duke, and went to him. Ambroise, already inclined to the Reformed religion, ended by adopting it; but the friendship of the Guises and of the French kings preserved him from the various disasters that befell the heretics. The Duke, who felt that he owed his life to Ambroise Paré, had appointed him surgeon-in-chief to the King within a few days past.

"What is it, monseigneur," said the leech. "Is the King ill? I should not be surprised."

"Why?"

"The Queen is too fascinating," said the surgeon.

"Ah!" replied the Duke, surprised. "However, that is not

the case," he went on after a pause. "Ambroise, I want you to see a friend of yours," and he led him on to the threshold of the council-chamber door and pointed to Christophe.

"Ah, to be sure," cried the surgeon, holding out his hand to the youth. "How is your father, my boy?"

"Very well, Master Ambroise," Christophe replied.

"And what are you doing at Court?" Paré went on. "It is not your business to carry parcels; your father wants to make a lawyer of you. Do you want the protection of these two great Princes to become a pleader?"

"Why, yes, indeed," replied Christophe, "but for my father's sake; and if you can intercede for us, add your entreaties," he went on, with a piteous air, "to obtain an order from Monseigneur the Grand Master for the payment of the moneys due to my father, for he does not know which way to turn——"

The Cardinal and his brother looked at each other, and seemed to be satisfied.

"Leave us now," said the Grand Master to Ambroise with a nod.—"And you, my friend," he added to Christophe, "settle your business quickly, and get back to Paris. My secretary will give you a pass, for, by Heaven, the roads will not be pleasant to travel on!"

Neither of the brothers had the slightest suspicion of the important interests that lay in Christophe's hands, being now quite assured that he was certainly the son of Lecamus, a good Catholic, purveyor to the Court, and that he had come solely to get his money.

"Take him round to be near the door of the Queen's chamber; she will ask for him no doubt," said the Cardinal to the surgeon.

While the furrier's son was being thus cross-questioned in the council-room, the King had left his mother and the Queen together, having gone into his dressing-room, which was beyond a room adjoining the bedroom.

Catherine, standing in the recess of the deep window, was

looking out on the gardens lost in melancholy thought. She foresaw that one of the greatest commanders of the age, in the course of that morning, in the very next hour, would take the place of her son the King, under the terrible title of Lieutenant-General of the kingdom. In the face of such peril she was alone, without a plan, without defence. Indeed, as she stood there in her mourning, which she had not ceased to wear since the death of Henri II., she might have been compared to a phantom, so still were her pale features as she stood absorbed in thought. Her black eyes seemed to wander in the indecision for which great politicians are so often blamed, which in them is the result of the breadth of sight which enables them to see every difficulty, and to balance one against the other, adding up the sum-total of risk before taking a part. There was a ringing in her ears, a turmoil in her blood; but she stood there, nevertheless, calm and dignified, while gauging the depths of the political abyss beyond the real gulf that lay at her feet.

Since the day when the Vidame de Chartres had been arrested, this was the second of those terrible days of which there were henceforth to be so many in the course of her royal career; but she never again made a mistake in the school of power. Though the sceptre seemed always to fly from her grasp, she meant to seize it, and, in fact, did seize it, by that sheer force of will which had never given way to the scorn of her father-in-law, Francis I., and his Court—by whom, though Dauphiness, she had been so little thought of—nor to the constant denials of Henri II., nor to the unresting antagonism of her rival, Diane de Poitiers. A man would not have understood this Queen in check; but Mary Stuart, so fair, so crafty, so clever, so girlish, and yet so omniscient watched her out of the corner of her eye while affecting to warble an Italian air with an indifferent countenance. Without understanding the tempest of ambition which brought a cold moisture to the Florentine Queen's brow, the pretty Scotch girl, with her saucy face, knew that the high position of her uncle the Duc de Guise was filling Catherine with suppressed

fury. Now, nothing amused her so much as watching her mother-in-law, whom she regarded as an intriguing adventuress, who, having been humbled, was always prepared for revenge. The face of the elder was grave and gloomy, a little cadaverous, by reason of the livid complexion of the Italians, which by daylight looks like yellow ivory, though by candle-light it is dazzling; while the younger face was bright and fresh. At sixteen Mary Stuart had that creamy fairness for which she was so famous. Her bright, rosy face, with clearly-cut features, sparkled with childish mischief, very frankly expressed in the regular arch of her brows, the brightness of her eyes, and the pert smile of her pretty mouth. She had then in perfection that kittenish grace which nothing —neither captivity nor the sight of the horrible block—ever completely quelled.

Thus these two Queens, one in the morning, the other in the summer of life, were at this time a perfect contrast. Catherine was an imposing sovereign, an impenetrable widow, with no passion but the love of power. Mary was a feather-brained and light-hearted wife, who thought of her crowns as playthings. One looked forward to impending misfortunes; she even had a glimpse of the murder of the Guises, guessing that this would be the only way to strike down men who were capable of raising themselves above the throne and the Parlement; she saw rivers of blood in a long struggle—the other little dreamed that she would herself be murdered by form of law.

A curious reflection brought a little calm to the Italian Queen.

"According to the soothsayer and to Ruggieri's forecast, this reign is soon to end. My difficulties will not last," thought she.

And thus, strange to say, an occult science, now forgotten —judicial astrology—was a support to Catherine at this juncture, as it was throughout her life; for the belief grew constantly from seeing the predictions of those who practised it realized with the greatest exactitude.

"You are very serious, madame," said Mary Stuart, taking from Dayelle's hands her little cap, pinched down over the parting of her hair with two frilled wings of handsome lace beyond the puffs of wavy yellow hair that shadowed her temples.

The painters of the time have so amply perpetuated this cap, that it now belongs essentially to the Queen of Scots, though it was Catherine who invented it when she went into mourning for Henri II.; but she could not wear it with such good effect as her daughter-in-law, to whom it was infinitely more becoming. And this was not the smallest of the grievances harbored by the Queen-mother against the young Queen.

"Does your Majesty mean that for a reproof?" said Catherine, turning to her daughter-in-law.

"I owe respect, and should not dare——" said the Scotch-woman meaningly, with a glance at Dayelle.

Between the two Queens the favorite waiting-woman stood like the figure-head on a fire-dog; an approving smile might cost her her life.

"How can I be as gay as you after losing the late King, and when I see my son's kingdom on the eve of a conflagration?"

"Politics do not much concern women," replied Mary Stuart. "Besides, my uncles are there."

These two sentences, in the circumstances, were two poisoned arrows.

"Let us see our furs then," the Italian replied, "and so turn our minds to our own business, while your uncles settle that of the kingdom."

"Oh, but we shall attend the Council, madame; we are of more use there than you suppose."

"We?" said Catherine, with feigned astonishment. "I, for my part, do not know Latin!"

"You fancy me so learned?" said Mary Stuart, with a laugh. "Nay, madame, I swear to you that at this moment I am studying in the hope of rivaling the Medici and of knowing some day how to heal the wounds of the country."

This sharp shaft pierced Catherine to the heart, for it was an allusion to the origin of the Medici, who were descended, as some said, from a leech, or, as others had it, from a rich drug merchant. She had no reply ready. Dayelle colored when her mistress looked to her for the applause which everybody, and even queens, expect from their inferiors when they have no better audience.

"Your witticisms, madame, cannot, unfortunately, heal either the maladies of the State or those of the Church," said Catherine, with calm and dignified coldness. "My forefathers' knowledge of such matters won them thrones; while you, if you persist in jesting in the midst of danger, are like enough to lose yours."

At this juncture Dayelle opened the door to Christophe, shown in by the chief physician himself after scratching at the door.

The young Reformer wanted to study Catherine's countenance, and affected a shyness, which was natural enough on finding himself in this place; but he was surprised by Mary's eagerness. She rushed at the boxes to look at her surcoat.

"Madame," said Christophe, addressing Catherine.

He turned his back on the other Queen and Dayelle, promptly taking advantage of the attention the two were devoting to the furs to strike a bold blow.

"What do you want of me?" asked Catherine, looking keenly at him.

Christophe had placed the agreement proposed by the Prince de Condé, with the Reformer's plan of action and an account of their forces, over his heart, between his cloth jerkin and his shirt, wrapped inside the furrier's bill of what Queen Catherine owed him.

"Madame," said he, "my father is in dreadful want of money, and if you would condescend to look through the accounts," he added, unfolding the paper and slipping the agreement under it, "you will see that your Majesty owes him six thousand crowns. May your goodness have pity on us! See, madame."

And he held out the document.

"Read it. This dates so far back as the accession of the late King."

Catherine was bewildered by the preamble to the address, but she did not lose her presence of mind; she hastily rolled up the paper, admiring the young man's readiness and daring. She saw from these masterly tactics that he would understand her, so she tapped him on the head with the roll of paper, and said:—"You are very ill advised, my young friend, in handing the bill in before the furs. Learn some knowledge of women! You must never ask for your money till we are perfectly satisfied."

"Is that the tradition?" said the young Queen to her mother-in-law, who made no reply.

"Ah, mesdames, excuse my father," said Christophe. "If he had not wanted the money, you would not have your furs. The country is up in arms, and there is so much danger on the roads, that only our great need induced me to come. No one else would risk his life."

"This lad is quite fresh," said Mary Stuart, smiling.

It is not superfluous to the better understanding of this important little scene to remark that a surcoat was, as the name implies, a sort of close-fitting jacket or spencer which ladies wore over their dress, and which wrapped them closely, shaped down to the hips. This garment protected the back, chest, and throat from the cold. Surcoats were lined with fur which turned up over the stuff, forming a more or less wide border. Mary Stuart while trying on her surcoat was looking at herself in a large Venetian mirror, to see the effect of it at the back; thus she had left her mother-in-law liberty to glance at the packet of papers, of which the volume might otherwise have excited her suspicions.

"Does a man ever speak to a lady of the dangers he has incurred when he is safe and sound in her presence?" said she, turning round on Christophe.

"Oh, madame, I have your account too," said he, looking at her with well-acted simplicity.

The young Queen looked at him from head to foot without taking the paper; but she observed, without drawing any conclusions at the moment, that he had taken Queen Catherine's bill out of his breast, and drew hers out of his pocket. Nor did she see in the lad's eyes the admiration that her beauty won her from all the world; but she was thinking so much of her surcoat, that she did not at once wonder what could be the cause of his indifference.

"Take it, Dayelle," said she to the waiting-woman. "You can give the account to Monsieur de Versailles (Loménie), and desire him, from me, to pay it."

"Indeed, madame, but if you do not give me an order signed by the King, or by His Highness the Grand Master, who is at hand, your gracious promise will have no effect."

"You are rather hastier than beseems a subject, my friend," said Mary Stuart. "So you do not believe in royal promises?"

The King came in dressed in his long silk hose and trunks, the breeches of the time, but wore neither doublet nor cloak; he had only a rich wrapper of velvet lined throughout with fur; for wrapper, a word of modern use, can alone describe the *négligé* of this apparel.

"Who is the rascal that doubts your word?" said the young King, who, though at a distance, had heard his wife's speech.

The door of the King's closet was hidden by the bed. This closet was subsequently called the old closet (*le Cabinet vieux*) to distinguish it from the splendid painted closet constructed for Henri III. on the other side of the room adjoining the hall of the States-General. Henri III. hid the assassins in the old closet, and sent to desire the Duc de Guise to attend him there; while he, during the murder, remained concealed in the new closet, whence he emerged only to see this overweening subject die—a subject for whom there could be no prison, no tribunal, no judges, no laws in the kingdom. But for these dreadful events, the historian could now hardly identify the former uses of these rooms and halls filled with soldiers. A sergeant writes to his sweetheart on the spot where Catherine gravely considered her struggle with *parties*

"Come, my boy," said the Queen-mother; "I will see that you are paid. Trade must flourish, and money is its main sinew."

"Ay, go, my good youth," said the young Queen, laughing; "my august mother understands matters of trade better than I do."

Catherine was about to leave the room without replying to this innuendo; but it struck her that her indifference might arouse suspicions, and she retorted on her daughter-in-law:

"And you, my dear, trade in love."

Then she went downstairs.

"Put all those things away, Dayelle.—And come to the council-room, Sire," said the young Queen to the King, enchanted at having to decide the important question of the lieutenancy of the kingdom in her mother-in-law's absence.

Mary Stuart took the King's arm. Dayelle went out first, speaking a word to the pages, and one of them—young Téligny, fated to perish miserably on the night of Saint-Bartholomew—shouted out:

"The King."

On hearing the cry, the two musketeers carried arms, and the two pages led the way towards the council-chamber between the line of courtiers on one side and the line formed by the maids of honor to the two Queens on the other. All the members of the Council then gathered round the door of the hall, which was at no great distance from the staircase. The Grand Master, the Cardinal, and the Chancellor advanced to meet the two young sovereigns, who smiled to some of the maids, or answered the inquiries of some of the Court favorites more intimate than the rest.

The Queen, however, evidently impatient, dragged Francis II. on towards the vast council-room. As soon as the heavy thud of the arquebuses dropping on the floor again announced that the royal pair had gone in, the pages put on their caps, and the conversations in the various groups took their course again on the gravity of the business about to be discussed.

"Chiverni was sent to fetch the Connétable, and he has not come," said one.

"There is no prince of the blood present," remarked another.

The Chancellor and Monsieur de Tournon looked anxious.

"The Grand Master has sent word to the Keeper of the Seals to be sure not to fail to attend this Council; a good many letters patent will be issued, no doubt."

"How is it that the Queen-mother remains below, in her own rooms, at such a juncture?"

"They are going to make things hot for us," said Groslot to Cardinal de Châtillon.

In short, every one had something to say. Some were pacing the room from end to end, others were flitting round the maids of honor, as though it could be possible to catch a few words through a wall three feet thick, or two doors and the heavy curtains that screened them.

The King, seated at one end of the long table covered with blue velvet, which stood in the middle of the room, his young Queen in an armchair at his side, was waiting for his mother. Robertet was mending his pens. The two Cardinals, the Grand Master, the Chancellor, the Keeper of the Seals—in short, the whole assembly, looked at the little King, wondering why he did not give the word for them all to be seated.

"Are we to sit in council in the absence of the Queen-mother?" the Chancellor asked, addressing the young King.

The two Guises ascribed Catherine's absence to some cunning trick of their niece's. Then, spurred by a significant look, the much daring Cardinal said to the King:

"Is it your Majesty's goodwill that we should proceed without madame your mother?"

Francis, not daring to have an opinion of his own, replied:

"Gentlemen, be seated."

The Cardinal briefly pointed out the dangers of the situation. This great politician, who showed astounding skill in this business, broached the question of the lieutenancy

amid utter silence. The young King was, no doubt, conscious of an awkwardness, and guessed that his mother had a real sense of the rights of the Crown, and a knowledge of the danger that threatened his power, for he replied to a direct question on the Cardinal's part:

"We will wait for my mother."

Enlightened by this inexplicable delay on Queen Catherine's part, Mary Stuart suddenly recalled in a single flash of thought three incidents which were clear in her memory. In the first place, the bulk of the packet presented to her mother-in-law, which she had seen, though so inattentive at the moment (for a woman who seems to see nothing is still a lynx), then the place where Christophe had carried them to separate them from hers.

"Why?" she said to herself. And then she remembered the boy's cold look, which she at once ascribed to the Reformers' hatred of the Guises' niece. A voice within her cried, "Is he not an envoy from the Huguenots?"

Acting, as all hasty persons do, on the first impulse, she exclaimed:

"I myself will go and fetch my mother."

She rushed away and down the stairs, to the great amazement of the gentlemen and ladies of the Court. She went down to her mother-in-law's rooms, crossed the guardroom, opened the door of the bedroom as stealthily as a thief, crept noiselessly over the carpet as silently as a shadow, and could see her nowhere. Then she thought she could surprise her in the splendid private room between the bedroom and the oratory. The arrangement of this oratory is perfectly recognizable to this day; the fashion of the time then allowed it to serve all the purposes in private life which are now served by a boudoir.

By a piece of good-fortune, quite unaccountable when we see in how squalid a state the Crown has left this château, the beautiful paneling of Catherine's closet exists to this day; in the fine carving the curious may still discern traces of

Italian magnificence, and discover the hiding-places the Queen-mother had contrived there.

A somewhat exact description of these curiosities is indeed indispensable to a comprehension of the scene that took place there. The woodwork at that time consisted of about a hundred and eighty small oblong panels, of which a hundred or so still remain, each carved with a different design, obviously suggested by the most elegant Italian arabesques. The wood is holm-oak; the red ground which is found under the coat of limewash, applied at the time of the cholera—a quite useless precaution—shows plainly that these panels were gilt; and in spots where the whitewash has rubbed off we see that some portions of the design were in color, blue, red, or green against the gold background. The number of these panels shows an evident intention to cheat investigation; but if there could be a doubt, the keeper of the château, while holding up Catherine's memory to the execration of all living men, shows to visitors, at the bottom of the paneling, and on a level with the floor, a somewhat heavy skirting which can be raised, and under which there are a number of ingenious springs. By pressing a knob thus concealed, the Queen could open certain of these panels, known to her alone, behind which lay a hiding-place of the same oblong shape as the panels, but of varying depth. To this day a practised hand would find it difficult to detect which of these panels would open on its invisible hinges; and when the eye was diverted by the skilfully combined colors and gilding that covered the cracks, it is easy to imagine that it was impossible to discover one or two panels among nearly two hundred.

At the moment when Mary Stuart laid her hand on the somewhat elaborate latch of the door to the closet, the Italian Queen, having convinced herself already of the importance of the Prince de Condé schemes, had just pressed the spring hidden by the skirting, one of the panels had fallen open, and Catherine had turned to the table to take up the papers and hide them, to turn her attention to the safeguard of

the devoted messenger who had brought them to her. When she heard the door open, she at once guessed that no one but Queen Mary would venture to come in unannounced.

"You are lost," she said to Christophe, seeing that she could neither hide the papers nor close the panel promptly enough to preserve the secret of her hiding-place.

Christophe's only reply was a sublime look.

"Povero mio!" said Catherine, before turning to her daughter-in-law. "Treason, madame!" she exclaimed. "I have them fast! Send for the Cardinal and the Duke. And be sure," she added, pointing to Christophe, "that this fellow does not escape!"

Thus in an instant this masterful woman saw that it would be necessary to give up the hapless young man; she could not hide him, it was impossible to help him to escape; and besides, though a week ago he might have been saved, now the Guises had, since that morning, been aware of the conspiracy, and they too must have the lists which she held in her hand, and were drawing all the Reformers into a trap. And so, pleased at finding her adversaries in the mind she had hoped for, now that the plot had become known, policy required her to assume the merit of discovering it.

These dreadful considerations flashed through her mind in the brief moment while the young Queen was opening the door. Mary Stuart stood silent for an instant. Her expression lost its brightness and assumed that keenness which suspicion always gives the eye, and which in her was terrible by the sudden contrast. She looked from Christophe to the Queen-mother, and from the Queen-mother to Christophe, with a glance of malignant doubt. Then she snatched up a bell, which brought in one of Catherine's maids of honor.

"Mademoiselle du Rouet, send in the captain of the Guard," said Mary Stuart, in breach of every law of etiquette, necessarily set aside in such circumstances.

While the young Queen gave her order, Catherine stood looking at Christophe, as much as to say, "Courage!" The young Reformer understood, and replied by an expression which conveyed, "Sacrifice me, as they have sacrificed me!"

"Put your trust in me," Catherine answered by a gesture.

Then when her daughter-in-law turned upon her, she was deeply engaged in examining the papers.

"You are of the Reformed religion?" said Mary Stuart to Christophe.

"Yes, madame."

"Then I was not mistaken," she muttered to herself, as she read in the young man's eyes the same expression in which coldness and aversion lurked behind a look of humility.

Pardaillan appeared at once, sent down by the two Princes of Lorraine and the King. The captain sent for by Mary Stuart followed this young man—a most devoted adherent of the Guises.

"Go from me to the King, beg him, with the Cardinal and the Grand Master, to come here at once, and tell them I would not take such a liberty but that something of serious importance has occurred.—Go, Pardaillan.—And you, Lewiston, keep guard over this Reformed traitor," she added to the Scotchman in their native tongue, pointing to Christophe.

The two Queens did not speak till the King came. It was a terrible pause. Mary Stuart had shown her mother-in-law the whole extent of the part her uncles made her play; her unsleeping and habitual distrust stood revealed; and her youthful conscience felt how disgraceful such a part must be to a great Queen. Catherine, on her side, had betrayed herself in her alarm, and feared that she had been understood; she was trembling for the future. The two women, one ashamed and furious, the other vicious but calm, withdrew into the window bay, one leaning on the right side, the other on the left; but their looks were so expressive, that each turned away, and with a common instinct looked out of the window at the sky. These two women, clever as they were, at that moment had no more wit than the commonest. Perhaps it is always so when circumstances overpower men. There is always a moment when even genius is conscious of its smallness in the presence of a great catastrophe.

As for Christophe, he felt like a man falling into an abyss. Lewiston, the Scotch captain, listened to the silence, looking at the furrier's son and the two Queens with a soldier's curiosity. The King's entrance put an end to this painful situation.

The Cardinal went straight up to Queen Catherine.

"I have in my hand all the threads of the plot hatched by the heretics; they sent this boy to me carrying this treaty and these documents," said Catherine in an undertone.

While Catherine was explaining matters to the Cardinal, Queen Mary was speaking a few words in the Grand Master's ear.

"What is this all about?" asked the young King, standing alone amid this conflict of violent interests.

"The proofs of what I was telling your Majesty are already to hand," said the Cardinal, seizing the papers.

The Duc de Guise, unmindful of the fact that he was interrupting him, drew his brother aside and said in a whisper:

"This then makes me Lieutenant-General without any opposition."

A keen glance was the Cardinal's only reply, by which he conveyed to his brother that he had already appreciated the advantages to be derived from Catherine's false position.

"Who sent you?" asked the Duke of Christophe.

"Chaudieu the preacher," he replied.

"Young man, you lie," said the Duke roughly. "It was the Prince de Condé."

"The Prince de Condé, monseigneur," replied Christophe, with a look of surprise. "I never saw him. I belong to the Palais. I am working under Monsieur de Thou. I am his clerk, and he does not know that I have joined the religion. I only submitted to the preacher's entreaties."

"That will do," said the Cardinal.—"Call Monsieur de Robertet," he added to Lewiston, "for this young villain is craftier than old politicians. He has taken us in, my brother and me, when we should have given him the Host without confession."

"You are no child, by Heaven!" cried the Duke, "and you shall be treated as a man."

"They hoped to win over your august mother," said the Cardinal, turning to the King, and trying to lead him aside to bring him to his way of thinking.

"Alas!" replied Catherine, speaking to her son with a reproachful air, and stopping him just as the Cardinal was taking him into the oratory to subjugate him with dangerous eloquence, "you here see the effect of the position I am placed in. I am supposed to rebel against my lack of influence in public affairs—I, the mother of four princes of the House of Valois."

The young King prepared to listen. Mary Stuart, seeing his brow knit, led him off into the window recess, where she cajoled him with gentle speeches in a low voice; much the same, no doubt, as those she had lavished on him when he rose.

The two brothers meanwhile read the papers handed over to them by the Queen-mother. Finding in them much information of which their spies and Monsieur de Braguelonne, the governor of the Châtelet, knew nothing, they were inclined to believe in Catherine's good faith. Robertet came in and had private instructions with regard to Christophe. The hapless tool of the leaders of the Reformation was led away by four men of the Scotch Guard, who took him downstairs and handed him over to Monsieur de Montrésor, the Provost of the château. This terrible personage himself escorted Christophe with five or six sergeants to the prison situated in the vaulted cellars of the now ruined tower, which the verger of the château of Blois shows the visitor, and says that these were the *oubliettes*.

After such an event the Council could only be an empty form: the King, the young Queen, the Grand Master, and the Cardinal de Lorraine went back to the council-room, taking with them Catherine, quite conquered, who only spoke to approve of the measures demanded by the Guises. In spite of some slight opposition on the part of the Chancellor

Olivier, the only person to utter a word suggesting the independence needful to the exercise of his functions, the Duc de Guise was appointed Lieutenant-General of the kingdom. Robertet carried the motions with a promptitude arguing such devotion as might be well called complicity.

The King, with his mother on his arm, once more crossed the guardroom, and announced to the Court that he proposed to move to Amboise on the following day. This royal residence had been unused since Charles VIII. had very involuntarily killed himself there by striking his head against the pediment of a door that was being carved for him, believing that he could pass under the scaffolding without bending his head. Catherine, to mask the schemes of the Guises, had announced her intention of finishing the château of Amboise on behalf of the Crown at the same time as her own château of Chenonceaux. But no one was deceived by this pretence, and the Court anticipated strange events.

After spending about two hours in accustoming himself to the darkness of his dungeon, Christophe found that it was lined with boards, clumsy indeed, but thick enough to make the square box healthy and habitable. The door, like that into a pig-sty, had compelled him to bend double to get into it. On one side of this trap a strong iron grating admitted a little air and light from the passage. This arrangement, exactly like that of the crypts at Venice, showed very plainly that the architect of the château of Blois belonged to the Venetian school, which gave so many builders to Europe in the Middle Ages. By sounding the walls above the woodwork, Christophe discovered that the two walls which divided this cell from two others, to the right and left, were built of brick; and as he knocked, to estimate the thickness of the wall, he was not a little surprised to hear some one knocking on the other side.

"Who are you?" asked his neighbor, speaking into the corridor.

"I am Christophe Lecamus."

"And I," said the other voice, "am Captain Chaudieu. I was caught this evening at Beaugency; but, happily, there is nothing against me."

"Everything is discovered," said Christophe; "so you are saved from the worst of it."

"We have three thousand men at this present time in the forests of Vendômois, all men determined enough to seize the Queen-mother and the King on their journey. Happily, la Renaudie was cleverer than I; he escaped. You had just set out when the Guisards caught us."

"But I know nothing of la Renaudie."

"Pooh! my brother told me everything," replied the captain.

On hearing this, Christophe went back to his bench and made no further reply to anything the so-called captain could say to him, for he had had enough experience of the law to know how necessary it was to be cautious in prison.

In the middle of the night he saw the pale gleam of a lantern in the passage, after hearing the unlocking of the ponderous bolts that closed the iron door of the cellar. The provost himself had come to fetch Christophe. This attention to a man who had been left in the dungeon without food struck Christophe as strange; but the upset at Court had, no doubt, led to his being forgotten. One of the provost's sergeants bound his hands with a cord, which he held till they had reached one of the low rooms in Louis XII.'s part of the château, which evidently was the ante-room to the apartments of some person of importance. The sergeant and the provost bid him be seated on a bench, where the sergeant tied his feet as he had already tied his hands. At a sign from Monsieur de Montrésor, the sergeant then left them.

"Now listen to me, my young friend," said the provost to Christophe, and the lad observed that he was in full dress at that hour of the night, for his fingers fidgeted with the collar of his Order. This circumstance made the furrier's son thoughtful; he saw that there was more to come. At this moment, certainly, they could not be going either to try him or to hang him.

"My young friend, you may spare yourself much suffering by telling me here and now all you know of the communications between Queen Catherine and Monsieur de Condé. Not only will you not be hurt, but you will be taken into the service of Monseigneur, the Lieutenant-General of the kingdom, who likes intelligent people, and who was favorably impressed by your looks. The Queen-mother is to be packed off to Florence, and Monsieur de Condé will no doubt stand his trial. So, take my word for it, small men will do well to attach themselves to the great men in power.—Tell me everything, and it will be to your advantage."

"Alas, monsieur," replied Christophe, "I have nothing to say. I have confessed all I know to Messieurs de Guise in the Queen's room. Chaudieu persuaded me to place those papers in the hands of the Queen-mother, by making me believe that the peace of the country was involved."

"You never saw the Prince de Condé?"

"Never," said Christophe.

Thereupon Monsieur de Montrésor left Christophe and went into an adjoining room.

Christophe was not long left to himself. The door by which he had entered soon opened for several men to pass in, who did not shut it, letting various far from pleasant sounds come in from the courtyard. Blocks of wood and instruments were brought in, evidently intended to torture the Reformers' messenger. Christophe's curiosity soon found matter for reflection in the preparations the newcomers were making under his very eyes. Two coarse and poorly-clad varlets obeyed the orders of a powerful and thick-set man, who, on coming in, had a look at Christophe like that of a cannibal at his victim; he had scrutinized him from head to foot, taking stock of his sinews, of their strength and power of resistance, with the calculating eye of a connoisseur. This man was the Blois executioner. Backwards and forwards several times, his men brought in a mattress, wooden wedges, planks, and other objects, of which the use seemed neither obvious nor hopeful to the unhappy boy for whom the prepa-

rations were being made, and whose blood ran cold in his veins with apprehension, which though vague was appalling. Two other men came in when Monsieur de Montrésor reappeared.

"What, is nothing ready yet?" said the chief provost, to whom the two newcomers bowed respectfully. "Do you know," he went on to the big man and his two satellites, "that Monsieur le Cardinal supposes you to be getting on with your work?—Doctor," he added, turning to one of the newcomers, "here is your man," and he pointed to Christophe.

The doctor went up to the prisoner, untied his hands, and sounded his back and chest. Science quite seriously repeated the torturer's investigation. Meanwhile, a servant in the livery of the House of Guise brought in several chairs, a table, and all the materials for writing.

"Begin your report," said Monsieur de Montrésor to the second person who had come in, dressed in black, who was a clerk.

Then he came back to stand by Christophe, to whom he said very mildly:

"My boy, the Chancellor, having learned that you refuse to give satisfactory replies to my questions, has decided that you must be put to the torture—ordinary and extraordinary."

"Is he in good health, and can he bear it?" the clerk asked of the doctor.

"Yes," said the man of medicine, a physician attached to the House of Lorraine.

"Well, then, retire to the adjoining room; we will send for you if it is necessary to consult you."

The physician left the room.

His first panic past, Christophe collected all his courage. The hour of his martyrdom was come. He now looked on with cold curiosity at the arrangements made by the executioner and his varlets. After hastily making up a bed, they proceeded to prepare a machine called the boot, consisting of boards, between which each leg of the victim was placed, surrounded with pads. The machinery used by bookbinders to press the volumes between two boards, which they tighten

with cords, will give a very exact idea of the way in which each leg was encased. It is easy, then, to imagine the effect of a wedge driven home by a mallet between the two cases in which the legs were confined, and which, being tightly bound with rope, could not yield. The wedges were driven in at the knees and ankles, as if to split a log of wood. The choice of these two spots where there is least flesh, and where, in consequence, the wedge found room at the expense of the bones, made this form of torture horribly painful. In ordinary torture four wedges were driven in—two at the knees and two at the ankles; in extraordinary torture as many as eight were employed, if the physician pronounced that the victim's powers of endurance were not exhausted.

At this period the boots were also applied to the hands; but as time pressed, the Cardinal, the Lieutenant-General of the kingdom, and the Chancellor spared Christophe this.

The preamble to the examination was written; the provost himself had dictated a few sentences, walking about the room with a meditative air, and requiring Christophe to tell him his name—Christian name—age, and profession; then he asked him from whom he had received the papers he had delivered to the Queen.

"From Chaudieu the minister," said he.

"Where did he give them to you?"

"At my own home in Paris."

"When he handed them to you, he must have told you whether the Queen-mother would receive you well."

"He told me nothing of the kind," replied Christophe. "He only desired me to give them secretly to Queen Catherine."

"Then have you often seen Chaudieu, that he knew that you were coming here?"

"It was not from me that he heard that I was to carry the furs to the two Queens, and at the same time to ask in my father's behalf for the money owed him by the Queen-mother; nor had I time to ask him who had told him."

"But those papers, given to you without any wrapper or

seal, contain a treaty between the rebels and Queen Catherine. You must have known that they exposed you to the risk of suffering the punishment dealt out to those who are implicated in a rebellion."

"Yes."

"The persons who induced you to commit an act of high treason must have promised you some reward and the Queen-mother's patronage."

"I did it out of attachment to Chaudieu, the only person I saw."

"Then you persist in declaring that you did not see the Prince de Condé?"

"Yes."

"Did not the Prince de Condé tell you that the Queen-mother was inclined to enter into his views in antagonism to the Guises?"

"I did not see him."

"Take care. One of your accomplices, la Renaudie, is arrested. Strong as he is, he could not resist the torture that awaits you, and at last confessed that he, as well as the Prince, had had speech with you. If you wish to escape the anguish of torture, I beg you to tell the simple truth. Then perhaps you may win your pardon."

Christophe replied that he could not tell anything of which he had no knowledge, nor betray accomplices, when he had none. On hearing this, the provost nodded to the executioner, and went back into the adjoining room.

On seeing this, Christophe knit his brows, wrinkling his forehead with a nervous spasm, and preparing to endure. He clenched his fists with such a rigid clutch that the nails ran into the flesh without his feeling it. The three men took him up, carried him to the camp bed, and laid him there, his legs hanging down. While the executioner tied him fast with stout ropes, his two men each fitted a leg into a boot; the cords were tightened by means of a wrench without giving the victim any great pain. When each leg was thus held in a vise, the executioner took up his mallet and his wedges, and looked alternately at the sufferer and the clerk.

"Do you persist in your denial?" said the clerk.

"I have told the truth," replied Christophe.

"Then go on," said the clerk, shutting his eyes.

The cords were tightened to the utmost, and this moment, perhaps, was the most agonizing of all the torture; the flesh was so suddenly compressed that the blood was violently thrown back into the trunk. The poor boy could not help screaming terribly; he seemed about to faint. The doctor was called back. He felt Christophe's pulse, and desired the executioner to wait for a quarter of an hour before driving in the wedges, to give time for the blood to recover its circulation and sensation to return.

The clerk charitably told Christophe that if he could not better endure even the beginnings of the suffering he could not escape, he would do better to reveal all he knew; but Christophe's only reply was:

"The King's tailor! the King's tailor!"

"What do you mean by saying that?" asked the clerk.

"Foreseeing the torments I shall go through," said Christophe, slowly, to gain time and to rest, "I am summoning all my strength, and trying to reinforce it by remembering the martyrdom endured for the sacred cause of the Reformation by the late King's tailor, who was tortured in the presence of the King and of Madame de Valentinois; I will try to be worthy of him!"

While the physician was advising the hapless man not to drive his torturers to extremities, the Cardinal and the Duke, impatient to know the results of this examination, came in and desired Christophe to reveal the truth at once. The furrier's son repeated the only confession he would allow himself to make, implicating nobody but Chaudieu.

The Princes nodded. On this, the executioner and his foreman seized their mallets, each took a wedge and drove it home between the boots, one standing on the right, and the other on the left. The executioner stood at the knees, the assistant at the ankles, opposite. The eyes of the witnesses of this hideous act were fixed on Christophe's, who, excited

no doubt by the presence of these grand personages, flashed such a look at them that his eyes sparkled like flame.

At the two next wedges a horrible groan escaped him. Then when he saw the men take up the wedges for the severer torture, he remained silent; but his gaze assumed such dreadful fixity, and flashed at the two Princes such a piercing magnetic fluid, that the Duke and the Cardinal were both obliged to look down. Philippe le Bel had experienced the same defeat when he presided at the torture by hammer, inflicted in his presence on the Templars. This consisted in hitting the victim on the chest with one arm of the balanced hammer used to coin money, which was covered with a leather pad. There was one knight whose eyes were so fixed on the King that he was fascinated, and could not take his gaze off the sufferer. At the third blow the King rose and went away, after hearing himself called upon to appear before the judgment of God within a year—as he did.

At the fifth wedge, the first of the greater torture, Christophe said to the Cardinal:

"Cut my misery short, monseigneur; it is useless."

The Cardinal and the Duke withdrew, and Christophe could hear from the next room these words, spoken by Queen Catherine:

"Go on, go on; after all, he is only a heretic!"

She thought it prudent to appear more severe to her accomplice than his executioners were.

The sixth and seventh wedges were driven in, and Christophe complained no more, his face shone with a strange radiance, due, no doubt, to the immense strength he derived from fanatical excitement. In what else but in feeling can we hope to find the fulcrum enabling a man to endure such anguish? At last, when the executioner was about to insert the eighth wedge, Christophe smiled. This dreadful torment had lasted one hour.

The clerk went to fetch the leech, to know whether the eighth wedge could be driven in without endangering the sufferer's life. The Duke meanwhile came in again to see Christophe.

"By our Lady! you are a fine fellow," said he, leaning down to speak in his ear. "I like a brave man. Enter my service, you shall be happy and rich, my favors will heal your bruised limbs; I will ask you to do nothing cowardly, like rejoining your own party to betray their plans; there are always plenty of traitors, and the proof is to be found in the prisons of Blois. Only tell me on what terms are the Queen-mother and the Prince de Condé."

"I know nothing about it, monseigneur," cried Lecamus.

The doctor came in, examined the victim, and pronounced that he could bear the eighth wedge.

"Drive it in," said the Cardinal. "After all, as the Queen says, he is only a heretic," he added, with a hideous smile at Christophe.

Catherine herself slowly came in from the adjoining room, stood in front of Christophe, and gazed at him coldly. She was the object of attentive scrutiny to the two brothers, who looked alternately at the Queen-mother and her accomplice. The whole future life of this ambitious woman depended on this solemn scrutiny; she felt the greatest admiration for Christophe's courage, and she looked at him sternly; she hated the Guises, and she smiled upon them.

"Come," said she, "young man, confess that you saw the Prince de Condé; you will be well rewarded."

"Oh, madame, what a part you are playing!" cried Christophe, in pity for her.

The Queen started.

"He is insulting me! Is he not to be hanged?" said she to the two brothers, who stood lost in thought.

"What a woman!" cried the Grand Master, who was consulting his brother in the window recess.

"I will stay in France and be revenged," thought the Queen. "Proceed, he must confess or let him die!" she exclaimed, addressing Monsieur de Montrésor.

The provost turned away, the executioners were busy, Catherine had an opportunity of giving the martyr a look, which no one else saw, and which fell like dew on Christophe. The

great Queen's eyes seemed to glisten with moisture; they were, in fact, full of tears, two tears at once repressed and dry. The wedge was driven home, one of the boards between which it was inserted split. Christophe uttered a piercing cry; then his face became radiant; he thought he was dying.

"Let him die," said the Cardinal, echoing Queen Catherine's words with a sort of irony. "No, no," he added to the provost, "do not let us lose this clue."

The Duke and the Cardinal held a consultation in a low voice.

"What is to be done with him?" asked the executioner.

"Send him to prison at Orleans," said the Duke.—"And, above all," he said to Monsieur de Montrésor, "do not hang him without orders from me."

The excessive sensitiveness of every internal organ, strung to the highest pitch by the endurance which worked upon every nerve in his frame, no less affected every sense in Christophe. He alone heard these words spoken by the Duc de Guise in the Cardinal's ear:

"I have not given up all hope of hearing the truth from this little man."

As soon as the two Princes had left the room, the executioners unpacked the victim's legs, with no attempt at gentle handling.

"Did you ever see a criminal with such fortitude?" said the head man to his assistants. "The rogue has lived through the infliction of the eighth wedge; he ought to have died. I am the loser of the price of his body."

"Untie me without hurting me, my good friends," said poor Christophe. "Some day I will reward you."

"Come, show some humanity," said the doctor. "Monseigneur the Duke esteems the young man, and commended him to my care," cried the leech.

"I am off to Amboise with my men," said the executioner roughly. "Take care of him yourself. And here is the jailer."

The executioner went off, leaving Christophe in the hands

of the smooth-spoken doctor, who, with the help of Christophe's warder, lifted him on to a bed, gave him some broth, which he made him swallow, sat down by his side, felt his pulse, and tried to comfort him.

"You are not dying," he said, "and you must feel a comfort to your mind when you reflect that you have done your duty. The Queen charged me to take good care of you," he added, in a low voice.

"The Queen is very good," said Christophe, in whom acute anguish had developed wonderful lucidity of mind, and who, after enduring so much, was determined not to spoil the results of his devotion. "But she might have saved me so much suffering by not delivering me to my tormentors, and by telling them herself the secrets, of which I know nothing."

On hearing this reply, the doctor put on his cap and cloak and left Christophe to his fate, thinking it vain to hope to gain anything from a man of that temper. The jailer had the poor boy carried on a litter by four men to the town prison, where Christophe fell asleep, in that deep slumber which, it is said, comes upon almost every mother after the dreadful pains of childbirth.

The two Princes of Lorraine, when they transferred the Court to Amboise, had no hope of finding there the leader of the Reformed party, the Prince de Condé, whom they had ordered to appear in the King's name to take him in a snare. As a vassal of the Crown, and as a Prince of the Blood, Condé was bound to obey the behest of the King. Not to come to Amboise would be a felony; but, by coming, he would place himself in the power of the Crown. Now, at this moment, the Crown, the Council, the Court, and every kind of power, were in the hands of the Duc de Guise and the Cardinal de Lorraine.

In this difficult dilemma, the Prince de Condé showed the spirit of decisiveness and astuteness, which made him a worthy representative of Jeanne d'Albret and the brave General of the Reformers' forces He traveled at the heels of the

last conspirators to Vendôme to support them in case of success. But when this first rush to arms ended in the brief skirmish in which the flower of the nobility whom Calvin had misled all perished, the Prince, and a following of fifty gentlemen, arrived at the château d'Amboise the very day after this affair, which the Guises, with crafty policy, spoke of as the riots at Amboise. On hearing of the Prince's advance, the Duke sent out the Maréchal de Saint-André to receive him with an escort of a hundred men-at-arms. When the Béarnais came to the gate of the château, the marshal in command refused to admit the Prince's suite.

"You must come in alone, sir," said the Chancellor Olivier, Cardinal de Tournon, and Birague, who awaited him outside the portcullis.

"And why?"

"You are suspected of felony," replied the Chancellor.

The Prince, who saw that his party was being cut off by the Duc de Nemours, quietly replied:

"If that is the case, I will go in to my cousin alone and prove my innocence."

He dismounted and conversed with perfect freedom with Birague, Tournon, the Chancellor Olivier, and the Duc de Nemours, from whom he asked details of the riot.

"Monseigneur," said the Duc de Nemours, "the rebels had sympathizers inside Amboise. Captain Lanoue had got in some men-at-arms, who opened the gate to them through which they got into the town, and of which they had the command——"

"That is to say, you got them into a sack," replied the Prince, looking at Birague.

"If they had been supported by the attack that was to have been made on the Porte des Bons-Hommes by Captain Chaudieu, the preacher's brother, they would have succeeded," said the Duc de Nemours, "but, from the position I had taken up, in obedience to the Duc de Guise, Captain Chaudieu was obliged to make a detour to avoid fighting me. Instead of arriving at night like the rest, that rebel did not come up till

daybreak, just as the King's troops had crushed those who had got into the town."

"And you had a reserve to recapture the gate that had been given up to them?"

"Monsieur le Maréchal de Saint-André was on the spot with five hundred men."

The Prince warmly praised these military manœuvres.

"To have acted thus," said he in conclusion, "the Lieutenant-General must have known the Reformers' secrets. They have evidently been betrayed."

The Prince was treated with greater strictness at each step. After being parted from his followers on entering the château, the Cardinal and the Chancellor stood in his way when he turned to the stairs leading to the King's apartments.

"We are instructed by the King, sir, to conduct you to your own rooms."

"Am I then a prisoner?"

"If that were the King's purpose, you would not be attended by a Prince of the Church and by me," replied the Chancellor.

The two functionaries led the Prince to an apartment where a guard—of honor so called—was allotted to him, and where he remained for several hours without seeing any one. From his window he looked out on the Loire, the rich country which makes such a beautiful valley between Amboise and Tours, and he was meditating on his situation, wondering what the Guises might dare to do to his person, when he heard the door of his room open, and saw the King's fool come in, Chicot, who had once been in his service.

"I heard you were in disgrace," said the Prince.

"You cannot think how sober the Court has become since the death of Henri II."

"And yet the King loves to laugh, surely."

"Which King? Francis II. or Francis of Lorraine?"

"Are you so fearless of the Duke that you speak so?"

"He will not punish me for that, sir," replied Chicot, smiling.

"And to what do I owe the honor of this visit?"

"Was it not due to you after your coming here? I have brought you my cap and bauble."

"I cannot get out then?"

"Try!"

"And if I do get out?"

"I will confess that you have won the game by playing against the rules."

"Chicot, you frighten me.—Have you been sent by some one who is interested in my fate?"

Chicot nodded "Yes." He went nearer to the Prince, and conveyed to him that they were watched and overheard.

"What have you to say to me?" asked Monsieur de Condé.

"That nothing but daring can get you out of the scrape," said the fool, whispering the words into his ear. "And this is from the Queen-mother."

"Tell those who have sent you," replied the Prince, "that I should never have come to this château if I had anything to blame myself for, or to fear."

"I fly to carry your bold reply," said the fool.

Two hours later, at one in the afternoon, before the King's dinner, the Chancellor and Cardinal de Tournon came to fetch the Prince to conduct him to Francis II. in the great hall where the Council had sat. There, before all the Court, the Prince de Condé affected surprise at the cool reception the King had given him, and he asked the reason.

"You are accused, cousin," said the Queen-mother sternly, "of having meddled with the plots of the Reformers, and you must prove yourself a faithful subject and a good Catholic if you wish to avert the King's anger from your House."

On hearing this speech, spoken by Catherine in the midst of hushed silence, as she stood with her hand in the King's arm and with the Duc d'Orléans on her left hand, the Prince de Condé drew back three steps, and with an impulse of dignified pride laid his hand on his sword, looking at the persons present.

"Those who say so, madame, lie in their throat!" he exclaimed in angry tones.

He flung his glove at the King's feet, saying:

"Let the man who will maintain his calumny stand forth!"

A shiver ran through the whole Court when the Duc de Guise was seen to quit his place; but instead of picking up the glove as they expected, he went up to the intrepid hunchback.

"If you need a second, Prince, I beg of you to accept my services," said he. "I will answer for you, and will show the Reformers how greatly they deceive themselves if they hope to have you for their leader."

The Prince de Condé could not help offering his hand to the Lieutenant-General of the kingdom. Chicot picked up the glove and restored it to Monsieur de Condé.

"Cousin," said the boy-King, "you should never draw your sword but in defence of your country.—Come to dinner."

The Cardinal de Lorraine, puzzled by his brother's action, led him off to their rooms. The Prince de Condé, having weathered the worst danger, gave his hand to Queen Mary Stuart to lead her to the dining-room; but, while making flattering speeches to the young Queen, he was trying to discern what snare was at this moment being laid for him by the Balafré's policy. In vain he racked his brain, he could not divine the Guises' scheme; but Queen Mary betrayed it.

"It would have been a pity," said she, laughing, "to see so clever a head fall; you must allow that my uncle is magnanimous."

"Yes, madame, for my head fits no shoulders but my own, although one is larger than the other.—But is it magnanimity in your uncle? Has he not rather gained credit at a cheap rate? Do you think it such an easy matter to have the law of a Prince of the Blood?"

"We have not done yet," replied she. "We shall see how you behave at the execution of the gentlemen, your friends, over which the Council have determined to make the greatest display."

"I shall do as the King does," said Condé.

"The King, the Queen-mother, and I shall all be present, with all the Court and the Ambassadors——"

"Quite a high day?" said the Prince ironically.

"Better than that," said the young Queen, "an *auto-da-fè,* a function of high political purport. The gentlemen of France must be subjugated by the Crown; they must be cured of their taste for faction and manœuvring——"

"You will not cure them of their warlike temper by showing them their danger, madame, and at this game you risk the Crown itself," replied the Prince.

At the end of this dinner, which was gloomy enough, Queen Mary was so unfortunately daring as to turn the conversation publicly on the trial which the nobles, taken under arms, were at that moment undergoing, and to speak of the necessity for giving the utmost solemnity to their execution.

"But, madame," said Francis II., "is it not enough for the King of France to know that the blood of so many brave gentlemen must be shed? Must it be a cause of triumph?"

"No, sir, but an example," replied Catherine.

"Your grandfather and your father were in the habit of seeing heretics burned," said Mary Stuart.

"The kings who reigned before me went their way," said Francis, "and I mean to go mine."

"Philip II.," Catherine went on, "who is a great king lately, when he was in the Netherlands, had an *auto-da-fè* postponed till he should have returned to Valladolid."

"What do you think about it, cousin?" said the King to the Prince de Condé.

"Sir, you cannot avoid going; the Papal Nuncio and the Ambassadors must be present. For my part, I am delighted to go if the ladies are to be of the party."

The Prince, at a glance from Catherine de' Medici, had boldly taken his line.

While the Prince de Condé was being admitted to the château of Amboise, the furrier to the two Queens was also arriving from Paris, brought thither by the uneasiness pro-

duced by the reports of the Rebellion, not only in himself and his family, but also in the Lalliers.

At the gate of the château, when the old man craved admission, the captain of the Guard, at the words "Queen's furrier," answered at once:

"My good man, if you want to be hanged, you have only to set foot in the courtyard."

On hearing this, the unhappy father sat down on a rail a little way off, to wait till some attendant on either of the Queens, or some woman of the Court, should pass him, to ask for some news of his son; but he remained there the whole day without seeing anybody he knew, and was at last obliged to go down into the town, where he found a lodging, not without difficulty, in an inn on the Square where the executions were to take place. He was obliged to pay a livre a day to secure a room looking out on the Square.

On the following day, he was brave enough to look on from his window at the rebels who had been condemned to the wheel, or to be hanged, as men of minor importance; and the Syndic of the Furriers' Guild was glad enough not to find his son among the sufferers.

When it was all over, he went to place himself in the clerk's way. Having mentioned his name, and pressed a purse full of crown-pieces into the man's hand, he begged him to see whether, in the three former days of execution, the name of Christophe Lecamus had occurred. The registrar, touched by the despairing old father's manners and tone of voice, conducted him to his own house. After carefully comparing notes, he could assure the old man that the said Christophe was not among those who had hitherto been executed, nor was he named among those who were to die within the next few days.

"My dear master," said the clerk to the furrier, "the Parlement is now engaged in trying the lords and gentlemen concerned in the business, and the principal leaders. So, possibly, your son is imprisoned in the château, and will be one in the magnificent execution for which my lords the Duc

de Guise and the Cardinal de Lorraine are making great preparations. Twenty-seven barons are to be beheaded, with eleven counts and seven marquises, fifty gentlemen in all, and leaders of the Reformers. As the administration of justice in Touraine has no connection with that of the Paris Parlement, if you positively must have some news of your son, go to my Lord the Chancellor Olivier, who, by the orders of the Lieutenant-General of the kingdom, has the management of the proceedings."

Three times did the poor old man go to the Chancellor's house and stand in a file of people in the courtyard, in common with an immense number of people who had come to pray for their relations' lives; but as titled folks were admitted before the middle class, he was obliged to give up all hope of speaking with the Chancellor, though he saw him several times coming out of his house to go either to the château or to the Commission appointed by the Parlement, along a way cleared for him by soldiers, between two hedges of petitioners who were thrust aside.

It was a dreadful scene of misery, for among this crowd were wives, daughters, and mothers, whole families in tears Old Lecamus gave a great deal of gold to the servants at the château, enjoining on them that they should deliver certain letters he wrote to la Dayelle, Queen Mary's waiting-woman, or to the Queen-mother's woman: but the lackeys took the good man's money, and then, by the Cardinal's orders, handed all letters to the Provost of the Law Court. As a consequence of their unprecedented cruelty, the Princes of Lorraine had cause to fear revenge; and they never took greater precautions than during the stay of the Count at Amboise, so that neither the most effectual bribery, that of gold, nor the most diligent inquiries brought the furrier any light as to his son's fate He wandered about the little town in a melancholy way, watching the tremendous preparations that the Cardinal was making for the shocking spectacle at which the Prince de Condé was to be present.

Public curiosity was being stimulated, by every means in

use at the time, from Paris to Nantes. The execution had been announced from the pulpit by every preacher, in a breath with the King's victory over the heretics.

Three elegant stands, the centre one apparently to be the finest of the three, were being erected against the curtain-wall of the château, at the foot of which the execution was to take place. All round the open space raised wooden seats were being put up, after the fashion of an amphitheatre, to accommodate the enormous crowd attracted by the notoriety of this *auto-da-fè*. About ten thousand persons were camping out in the fields on the day before this hideous spectacle. The roofs were crowded with spectators, and windows were let for as much as ten livres, an enormous sum at that time.

The unhappy father had, as may be supposed, secured one of the best places for commanding a view of the Square where so many men of family were to perish, on a huge scaffold erected in the middle, and covered with black cloth. On the morning of the fatal day, the headsman's block, on which the victim laid his head, kneeling in front of it, was placed on the scaffold, and an armchair, hung with black, for the Recorder of the Court, whose duty it was to call the condemned by name and read their sentence. The enclosure was guarded from early morning by the Scotch soldiers and the men-at-arms of the King's household, to keep the crowd out till the hour of the executions.

After a solemn mass in the chapel of the château and in every church in the town, the gentlemen were led forth, the last survivors of all the conspirators. These men, some of whom had been through the torture chamber, were collected round the foot of the scaffold, and exhorted by monks, who strove to persuade them to renounce the doctrines of Calvin. But not one would listen to these preachers, turned on to them by the Cardinal de Lorraine, among whom, no doubt, these gentlemen feared that there might be some spies on behalf of the Guises.

To escape being persecuted with these exhortations, they began to sing a psalm turned into French verse by Clément

Marot. Calvin, as is well known, had decreed that God should be worshiped in the mother-tongue of every country, from motives of common sense as well as from antagonism to the Roman Church. It was a pathetic moment for all those among the throng, who felt for these gentlemen, when they heard this verse sung at the moment when the Court appeared on the scene:

Lord, help us in our need!
Lord, bless us with Thy grace!
And on the saints in sore distress
Let shine Thy glorious face!

The eyes of the Reformers all centered on the Prince de Condé, who was intentionally placed between Queen Mary and the Duc d'Orléans. Queen Catherine de' Medici sat next her son, with the Cardinal on her left. The Papal Nuncio stood behind the two Queens. The Lieutenant-General of the kingdom was on horseback, below the Royal stand, with two marshals of France and his captains. As soon as the Prince de Condé appeared, all the gentlemen sentenced to death, to whom he was known, bowed to him, and the brave hunchback returned the salutation.

"It is hard," said he to the Duc d'Orléans, "not to be civil to men who are about to die."

The two other grand stands were filled by invited guests, by courtiers, and the attendants on their Majesties; in short, the rank and fashion of the château from Blois, who thus rushed from festivities to executions, just as they afterwards rushed from the pleasures of Court life to the perils of war, with a readiness which to foreigners will always be one of the mainsprings of their policy in France. The poor Syndic of the Furriers' Guild felt the keenest joy at failing to discern his son among the fifty-seven gentlemen condemned to death.

At a signal from the Duc de Guise, the clerk, from the top of the scaffold, called out at once, in a loud voice:

"Jean-Louis-Albéric, Baron de Raunay, guilty of heresy, of the crime of high treason, and of bearing arms against the King's Majesty."

A tall, handsome man mounted the scaffold with a firm step, bowed to the people and to the Court, and said:

"The indictment is false; I bore arms to deliver the King from his enemies of Lorraine!"

He laid his head on the block, and it fell.

The Reformers sang:

Thou, Lord, hast proved our faith
And searched our soul's desire,
And purified our froward hearts,
As silver proved by fire.

"Robert-Jean-René Briquemaut, Comte de Villemongis, guilty of high treason and rebellion against the King," cried the Recorder.

The Count dipped his hands in the Baron de Raunay's blood, and said:

"May this blood be on the head of those who are truly guilty!"

The Reformers sang on:

Thou, Lord, hast led our feet
Where foes had laid their snare;
To Thee, O Lord, the glory be,
Though we should perish there.

"Confess, my lord Nuncio," said the Prince de Condé, "that if French gentlemen know how to plot, they also know how to die."

"What hatred you are entailing on the heads of your children, brother," said the Duchesse de Guise to the Cardinal de Lorraine.

"The sight makes me feel sick," said the young King, who had turned pale at the sight of all this bloodshed.

"Pooh! Rebels!" said Catherine de' Medici.

Still the hymn went on, still the axe was plied. At last the sublime spectacle of men who could die singing, and, above all, the impression produced on the crowd by the gradual dwindling of the voices, became stronger than the terror inspired by the Guises.

"Mercy!" cried the mob, when they heard at last only the feeble chant of a single victim, reserved till the last, as being the most important.

He was standing alone at the foot of the steps leading up to the scaffold, and sang:

Lord, help us in our need!
Lord, bless us with Thy grace!
And on the saints in sore distress
Let shine Thy glorious face!

"Come, Duc de Nemours," said the Prince de Condé, who was tired of his position; "you, to whom the securing of the victory is due, and who helped to entrap all these people,—do not you feel that you ought to ask the life of this one? It is Castelnau, who, as I was told, had your promise for courteous treatment when he surrendered——"

"Did I wait to see him here before trying to save him?" said the Duc de Nemours, stung by this bitter reproof.

The clerk spoke slowly, intentionally, no doubt:

"Michel-Jean-Louis, Baron de Castelnau-Chalosse, accused and convicted of the crime of high treason, and of fighting against his Majesty the King."

"No," retorted Castelnau haughtily; "it can be no crime to oppose the tyranny and intended usurpation of the Guises!"

The headsman, who was tired, seeing some stir in the royal seats, rested on his axe.

"Monsieur le Baron," said he, "I should be glad not to hurt you. One minute may perhaps save you."

And all the people shouted again for mercy.

"Come," said the King, "a pardon for poor Castelnau, who saved the Duc d'Orléans."

The Cardinal intentionally misinterpreted the word "Come." He nodded to the executioner, and Castelnau's head fell at the moment when the King pronounced his pardon.

"That one goes to your account, Cardinal," said Catherine.

On the day after this horrible massacre, the Prince de Condé set out for Navarre.

This affair made a great sensation throughout France and in every foreign Court. The torrents of noble blood then shed caused the Chancellor Olivier such deep grief, that this admirable judge, seeing the end at which the Guises were aiming, felt that he was not strong enough to hold his own against them. Although they had made him what he was, he would not sacrifice his duty and the Monarchy to them; he retired from public life, suggesting that l'Hôpital should be his successor. Catherine, on hearing of Olivier's choice, proposed Birague for the post of Chancellor, and urged her request with great pertinacity. The Cardinal, who knew nothing of the note written to Catherine by l'Hôpital, and who believed him still faithful to the House of Lorraine, upheld him as Birague's rival, and the Queen-mother affected to be overridden.

L'Hôpital was no sooner appointed than he took steps to prevent the introduction into France of the Holy Office, which the Cardinal de Lorraine wished to establish; and he so effectually opposed the Anti-Gallican measures and policy of the Guises, and showed himself so sturdy a Frenchman, that within three months of his appointment he was exiled, to reduce his spirit, to his estate of le Vignay, near Etampes.

Old Lecamus impatiently waited till the Court should leave Amboise, for he could find no opportunity of speaking to either Queen Mary or Queen Catherine; but he hoped to be able to place himself in their way at the time when the Court should be moving along the river-bank on the way back to Blois. The furrier dressed himself as a poor man, at the risk of being seized as a spy, and favored by this disguise, he mingled with the beggars who stood by the wayside.

After the departure of the Prince de Condé, the Duke and

the Cardinal thought that they had silenced the Reformed party, and they left the Queen-mother a little more liberty. Lecamus knew that Catherine, instead of traveling in a litter, liked to ride on horseback on a *planchette,* as it was called, a side saddle with a foot-rest. This sort of stirrup was invented by or for Catherine, who, having hurt her leg, rested both feet on a velvet sling, sitting sideways, and supporting one knee in a hollow cut in the saddle. As the Queen had very fine legs, she was accused of having hit on this device for displaying them.

Thus the old man was able to place himself in sight of the Queen-mother; but when she saw him, she affected anger.

"Go away from hence, good man, and let no one see you speaking to me," she said with some anxiety. "Get yourself appointed delegate to the States-General from the corporation of Paris Guilds, and be on my side in the Assembly at Orleans, you will then hear something definite about your son——"

"Is he alive?" said the old man.

"Alas!" said the Queen, "I hope it."

And Lecamus was obliged to return home with this sad reply, and the secret as to the convocation of the States-General, which the Queen had told him.

Some days before this, the Cardinal de Lorraine had received information as to the guilt of the Court of Navarre. At Lyons, and at Mouvans in Dauphiné, the Reformers, commanded by the most enterprising of the Bourbon princes, had tried to inflame the population. This daring attempt, after the dreadful executions at Amboise, astonished the Guises, who, to put an end to heresy, no doubt, by some means of which they kept the secret, proposed to assemble the States-General at Orleans. Catherine de' Medici, who saw a support for her own policy in the representations of the nation, consented with joy. The Cardinal, who aimed at recapturing his prey, and overthrowing the House of Bourbon, convoked the States solely to secure the presence of the

Prince de Condé and of the King of Navarre, Antoine de Bourbon, father of Henri IV. He then meant to make use of Christophe to convict the Prince of high treason if he were able once more to get him into the King's power.

After spending two months in the prison of Blois, Christophe one morning was carried out on a litter lying on a mattress, was embarked on a barge, and taken up the river to Orleans before a westerly breeze. He reached that town the same evening, and was taken to the famous tower of Saint-Aignan. Christophe, who knew not what to make of his transfer, had time enough for meditation on his behavior and on his future prospects. There he remained two months more, on his bed, unable to use his legs. His bones were crushed. When he begged to be allowed the help of a surgeon, the jailer told him that his orders with regard to his prisoner were so strict that he dared not allow any one else even to bring him his food. This severity, of which the effect was absolutely solitary confinement, surprised Christophe. His idea was that he must be either hanged or released; he knew nothing whatever of the events happening at Amboise.

In spite of the secret warnings to remain at home sent to them by Catherine de' Medici, the two chiefs of the House of Bourbon determined to appear at the meeting of the States-General, since autograph letters from the King were reassuring; and when the Court was settling at Orleans, Groslot, the Chancellor of Navarre, announced their advent, to the surprise of all.

Francis II. took up his quarters in the house of the Chancellor of Navarre, who was also the Bailli or Recorder of Orleans. This man Groslot, whose double appointment is one of the odd features of a time when Reformers were in possession of abbeys—Groslot, the Jacques Cœur of Orleans, one of the richest citizens of his day, did not leave his name to his house. It came to be known as the *Bailliage,* having been purchased, no doubt, from his heirs, by the Crown, or by the provincial authorities, to be the seat of that tribunal. This elegant structure, built by the citizens of the sixteenth

century, adds a detail to the history of a time when the King, the nobility, and the middle class vied with each other in wealth, elegance, and splendor; especially in their dwellings —as may be seen at Varangeville, Ango's magnificent manor-house, and the Hôtel d'Hercules, as it is called, in Paris, which still exists, but in a condition that is the despair of archæologists and of lovers of mediæval art.

Those who have been to Orleans can hardly have failed to observe the Hôtel de Ville in the Place de l'Estape. This townhall is the Old Bailli's Court, the Hôtel Groslot, the most illustrious and most neglected house in Orleans.

The remains of this hotel plainly show to the archæologist's eye how magnificent it must once have been, at a time when citizens built their houses more of wood than of stone, and the upper ranks alone had the right to build manor-houses, a word of special meaning. Since it served as the King's residence at a time when the Court made so much display of pomp and luxury, the Hôtel Groslot must then have been the largest and finest house in Orleans.

It was on the Place de l'Estape that the Guises and the King held a review of the municipal guard, to which Monsieur de Cypierre was nominated captain during the King's visit. At that time, the Cathedral of Sainte-Croix—afterwards finished by Henri IV., who desired to set the seal to his conversion—was being built, and the surrounding ground, strewn with blocks of stone and encumbered with piles of timber, was held by the Guises, who lodged in the Bishop's palace, now destroyed.

The town was in military occupation, and the measures adopted by the Guises plainly showed how little liberty they intended to give to the States-General, while the delegates flocked into the town and raised the rents of the most wretched lodgings. The Court, the municipal militia, the nobles, and the citizens all alike expected some *Coup d'État;* and their expectations were fulfilled when the Princes of the Blood arrived.

As soon as the two Princes entered the King's room, the

Court saw with dismay how insolent was the behavior of the Cardinal de Lorraine, who, to assert his audacious pretensions, kept his head covered, while the King of Navarre before him was bareheaded. Catherine de' Medici stood with downcast eyes, not to betray her indignation. A solemn exclamation then took place between the young King and the two heads of the younger branch. It was brief, for at the first words spoken by the Prince de Condé, Francis II. closed the discussion by saying:

"My lords and cousins, I fancied the incident of Amboise was at an end; it is not so, and we shall see cause to regret our indulgence!"

"It is not the King who speaks thus," said the Prince de Condé, "but Messieurs de Guise."

"Good-day, monsieur," said the little King, crimson with rage.

As he went through the great hall, the Prince was stopped by the two captains of the Guards. When the officer of the French Guard stepped forward, the Prince took a letter out of the breast of his doublet and said, in the presence of all the Court:

"Can you read me this, Monsieur de Maillé-Brézé?"

"With pleasure," said the French captain:—

"'Cousin, come in all security; I give you my royal word that you may. If you need a safe conduct, these presents will serve you.'"

"And signed——?" said the bold and mischievous hunchback.

"Signed 'François,'" said Maillé.

"Nay, nay," replied the Prince, "it is signed 'Your good cousin and friend, François!'—Gentlemen," he went on, turning to the Scotch Guard, "I will follow you to the prison whither you are to escort me by the King's orders. There is enough noble spirit in this room to understand that."

The utter silence that reigned in the room might have

enlightened the Guises, but silence is the last thing that princes listen to.

"Monseigneur," said the Cardinal de Tournon, who was following the Prince, "since the day at Amboise you have taken steps in opposition to royal authority at Lyons and at Mouvans in Dauphiné—things of which the King knew nothing when he addressed you in those terms."

"Rascals!" cried the Prince, laughing.

"You made a public declaration against the Mass, and in favor of heresy——"

"We are masters in Navarre," said the Prince.

"In Béarn, you mean! But you owe homage to the Crown," replied the Président de Thou.

"Ah, you are here, Président!" exclaimed the Prince ironically. "And is all the Parlement with you?"

With these words the Prince flashed a look of contempt at the Cardinal and left the room; he understood that his head was in peril.

On the following day, when Messieurs de Thou, de Viole, d'Espesse, Bourdin the public prosecutor, and du Tillet, the chief clerk, came into his prison, he kept them standing, and expressed his regrets at seeing them engaged on a business which did not concern them; then he said to the clerk:

"Write."

And he dictated as follows:

"I, Louis de Bourbon, Prince de Condé, peer of the realm, Marquis de Conti, Comte de Soissons, Prince of the Blood of France, formally refuse to recognize any Commission appointed to try me, inasmuch as that by virtue of my rank and the privileges attaching to every member of the Royal Family, I can only be attainted, heard, and judged by a Parlement of all the peers in their places, the Chambers in full assembly, and the King seated on the bed of justice.—You ought to know this better than any one, gentlemen, and this is all you will get of me. For the rest, I trust in God and my Right."

The magistrates proceeded nevertheless, in spite of the determined silence of the Prince.

The King of Navarre was at liberty, but closely watched; his prison was a wider one than the Prince's, and that was the whole difference between his position and his brother's; for the heads of the King and the Prince were to be felled at the same time.

So Christophe was so closely confined by order of the Cardinal and the Lieutenant-General of the kingdom only to afford proof to the judges of the Prince's guilt. The letters found on the person of La Sagne, the Prince's secretary, intelligible to a statesman, were not clear enough for the judges. The Cardinal had thought of bringing the Prince accidentally face to face with Christophe, who had been placed, not without a purpose, in a lower room of the tower of Saint-Aignan, and the window looked out on the yard. Each time he was examined by the magistrates, Christophe entrenched himself in systematic denial, which naturally prolonged the affair till the meeting of the States-General.

Lecamus, who had made a point of getting himself elected by the citizens of Paris as a deputy for the "Third Estate," came to Orleans a few days after the Prince's arrest. This event, of which he had news at Etampes, increased his alarms, for he understood—he who alone in the world knew of his son's interview with the Prince under the Pont-au-Change—that Christophe's fate was bound up with that of the rashly daring head of the Reformation party. So he determined to study the mysterious interests which had become so entangled at Court since the States had met, so as to hit upon some plan for rescuing his son. It was in vain to think of having recourse to Queen Catherine, who refused to receive the furrier. No one of the Court to whom he had access could give him any satisfactory information with regard to Christophe, and he had sunk to such depths of despair that he was about to address himself to the Cardinal, when he heard that Monsieur de Thou had accepted the office of one of the judges of the Prince de Condé—a blot on the good fame of that great jurist. The Syndic went to call on his son's patron, and learned that Christophe was alive but a prisoner.

Tourillon, the glover, to whose house la Renaudie had sent Christophe, had offered a room to the Sieur Lecamus for the whole time during which the States-General should be sitting. He believed the furrier to be, like himself, secretly attached to the Reformed religion; but he soon perceived that a father who fears for his son's life thinks no more of shades of religious dogma; he throws himself soul and body on the mercy of God, never thinking of the badge he wears before men.

The old man, repulsed at every attempt, wandered half-witless about the streets. Against all his expectations, his gold was of no avail; Monsieur de Thou had warned him that even if he should bribe some servant of the Guise household, he would only be so much out of pocket, for the Duke and the Cardinal allowed nothing to be known concerning Christophe. This judge, whose fair fame is somewhat tarnished by the part he played at this juncture, had tried to give the unhappy father some hope; but he himself trembled for his godson's life, and his consolations only added to the furrier's alarm. The old man was always prowling round the house; in three months he grew quite thin.

His only hope now lay in the warm friendship which had so long bound him to the Hippocrates of the sixteenth century. Ambroise Paré tried to say a word to Queen Mary as he came out of the King's room; but the instant he mentioned Christophe, the daughter of the Stuarts, annoyed by the prospect before her in the event of any ill befalling the King, whom she believed to have been poisoned by the Reformers, as he had been taken suddenly ill, replied:

"If my uncles would take my opinion, such a fanatic would have been hanged before now."

On the evening when this ominous reply had been repeated to Lecamus by his friend Paré, on the Place de l'Estape, he went home half dead, and retired to his room, refusing to eat any supper.

Tourillon, very uneasy, went upstairs, and found the old man in tears; and as the poor furrier's feeble eyes showed

the reddened and wrinkled linings of the lids, the glover believed that they were tears of blood.

"Be comforted, father," said the Huguenot, "the citizens of Orleans are enraged at seeing their town treated as if it had been taken by assault, and guarded by Monsieur de Cypierre's soldiery. If the Prince de Condé's life should be in danger, we should very soon demolish the tower of Saint-Aignan, for the whole town is on the Reformers' side, and would rise in rebellion, you may be quite certain."

"But even if the Guises were seized, would their death give me back my son?" said the unhappy father.

At this instant there was a timid rap at the outer door; Tourillon went down to open it. It was quite dark. In these troubled times the master of every household took elaborate precautions. Tourillon looked out through the bars of a wicket in the door, and saw a stranger, whose accent betrayed him as an Italian. This man, dressed in black, asked to see Lecamus on matters of business, and Tourillon showed him in. At the sight of the stranger the old furrier quaked visibly, but the visitor had time to lay a finger on his lips. Lecamus, understanding the gesture, immediately said:

"You have come to offer furs for sale, I suppose?"

"*Si,*" replied the stranger in Italian, with an air of privity.

This man was, in fact, the famous Ruggieri, the Queen-mother's astrologer. Tourillon went downstairs, perceiving that he was not wanted.

"Where can we talk without fear of being overheard?" said the astute Florentine.

"Only in the open fields," replied Lecamus. "But we shall not be allowed out of the town; you know how strictly the gates are guarded. No one can pass out without an order from Monsieur de Cypierre, not even a member of the Assembly like myself. Indeed, at to-morrow's sitting we all intend to complain of this restriction on our liberty."

"Work like a mole, never let your paws be seen in any kind of business," replied the wily Florentine. "To-morrow will no doubt be a decisive day. From my calculations, to-morrow, or soon after, you will perhaps see your son."

"God grant it! Though you are said to deal only with the Devil!"

"Come and see me at home," said the astrologer, smiling. "I watch the stars from the tower belonging to the Sieur Touchet du Beauvais, the Lieutenant of the Bailiwick, whose daughter has found favor in the eyes of the little Duc d'Orléans. I have cast the girl's horoscope, and it does in fact portend that she will become a great lady and be loved by a King. The Lieutenant is a clever fellow, he is interested in science, and the Queen found me lodgings with the good man, who is cunning enough to be a rabid Guisard till Charles IX. comes to the throne."

The furrier and the astrologer made their way to the Sieur du Beauvais' house without being seen or interfered with; and in the event of Lecamus being discovered, Ruggieri meant to afford him a pretext in his desire to consult the astrologer as to his son's fate.

When they had climbed to the top of the turret where the astrologer had established himself, Lecamus said:

"Then my son is really alive?"

"At present," said the Italian. "But we must make haste to save him. Remember, O seller of skins, that I would not give two farthings for yours if in the whole course of your life you breathe one word of what I am about to tell you."

"The warning is not needed, master. I have been furrier to the Court since the time of the late King Louis XII., and this is the fourth reign I have lived under."

"And you may soon say the fifth," replied Ruggieri.

"What do you know of my son?"

"Well, he has been through the torture-chamber."

"Poor boy!" sighed the old man, looking up to heaven.

"His knees and ankles are a little damaged, but he has gained royal protection, which will be over him as long as he lives," the Florentine added, on seeing the father's horror. "Your little Christophe has done good service to our great Queen Catherine. If we can get your son out of the clutches of the Cardinal, you will see him Councillor in the Parlement

yet. And a man would let his bones be broken three times over to find himself in the good graces of that beloved sovereign—a real genius she, who will triumph over every obstacle.

"I have cast the horoscope of the Duc de Guise: he will be killed within a year. Come now, Christophe did meet the Prince de Condé——"

"You know the future, do not you know the past?" the furrier put in.

"I am not questioning you, I am informing you, good man. Well, your son will be placed to-morrow where the Prince will pass by. If he recognizes him, or if the Prince recognizes your son, Monsieur de Condé forfeits his head. As to what would become of his accomplice—God only knows! But be easy. Neither your son nor the Prince is doomed to die; I have read their destiny; they will live. But by what means they may escape I know not. Now we will do what we can, apart from the certainty of my calculations. Monsieur de Condé shall get a prayer-book to-morrow, delivered to him by a safe hand, in which he shall find a warning. God grant that your son may be secretive, for he can have no warning! And a mere flash of recognition would cost the Prince his life. Thus, although the Queen-mother has every reason to depend on Christophe's fidelity——"

"He has been put to cruel tests," cried the furrier.

"Do not speak in that way. Do you suppose that the Queen is dancing for joy? She is indeed going to take her measures exactly as though the Guises had decided on the Prince's death; and she is wise, that shrewd and prudent Queen! Now she counts on you to help her in every way. You have some influence in the 'Third Estate,' where you are the representative of the Guilds of Paris; and even if the Guisards should promise to set your son at liberty, try to deceive them and stir up your class against the Princes of Lorraine. Vote for the Queen-mother as Regent; the King of Navarre will give his assent to that publicly, to-morrow, in the Assembly."

"But the King?"

"The King will die," said Ruggieri; "I have read it in the stars. What the Queen requires of you in the Assembly is very simple; but she needs a greater service from you than that. You maintained the great Ambroise Paré while he was a student; you are his friend——"

"Ambroise loves the Duc de Guise in these days better than he loves me," said the furrier. "And he is right; he owes his place to him. Still, he is faithful to the King. And, although he has a leaning towards the Reformation, he will do nothing but his duty."

"A plague on all honest men!" cried the Florentine. "Ambroise boasted this evening that he could pull the little King through. If the King recovers his health, the Guises must triumph, the Princes are dead men, the House of Bourbon is extinct, we go back to Florence, your son is hanged, and the Guises will make short work of the rest of the Royal Family——"

"Great God!" cried Lecamus.

"Do not exclaim in that way; it is like a citizen who knows nothing of Court manners; but go forthwith to Ambroise, and find out what he means to do to save the King. If it seems at all certain, come and tell me what the operation is in which he has such faith."

"But——" Lecamus began.

"Obey me blindly, my good friend, otherwise you will be dazzled."

"He is right," thought the furrier.

And he went off to the King's surgeon, who lived in an inn in the Place du Martroi.

At this juncture Catherine de' Medici found herself, politically speaking, in the same extremities as she had been in when Christophe had seen her at Blois. Though she had inured herself to the struggle, and had exerted her fine intellect in that first defeat, her situation, though precisely the same now as then, was even more critical and dangerous than at the time of the riots at Amboise. Events had grown

in magnitude, and the Queen had grown with them. Though she seemed to proceed in agreement with the Princes of Lorraine, Catherine held the threads of a conspiracy skilfully plotted against her terrible associates, and was only waiting for a favorable moment to drop her mask.

The Cardinal had just found himself deceived by Catherine. The crafty Italian had seen in the younger branch of the Royal Family an obstacle she could use to check the pretensions of the Guises; and, in spite of the counsel of the two Gondis, who advised her to leave the Guises to act with what violence they could against the Bourbons, she had, by warning the Queen of Navarre, brought to nought the plot to seize Béarn concerted by the Guises with the King of Spain. As this State secret was known only to themselves and to Catherine, the Princes of Lorraine were assured of her betrayal, and they wished to send her back to Florence; but to secure proofs of Catherine's treachery to the State—the House of Lorraine was the State—the Duke and Cardinal had just made her privy to their scheme for making away with the King of Navarre.

The precautions which were immediately taken by Antoine de Bourbon proved to the brothers that this secret, known but to three people, had been divulged by the Queen-mother. The Cardinal de Lorraine accused Catherine of her breach of faith in the presence of the King, threatening her with banishment if any fresh indiscretions on her part should imperil the State. Catherine, seeing herself in imminent danger, was compelled to act as a high-handed sovereign. She gave ample proof indeed of her fine abilities, but it must also be confessed that she was well served by the friends she trusted.

L'Hôpital sent her a letter in these terms:

"Do not allow a Prince of the Blood to be killed by a committee, or you will soon be carried off yourself."

Catherine sent Birague to le Vignay, desiring the Chan-

cellor to come to the Assembly of the States-General, although he was in banishment. Birague returned the same evening with l'Hôpital, halting within three leagues of Orleans, and the Chancellor thus declared himself on the side of the Queen-mother.

Chiverni, whose fidelity was with good reason regarded as doubtful by the Guises, had fled from Orleans, and by a forced march, which nearly was his death, he reached Écouen in ten hours. He there told the Connétable de Montmorency of the danger his nephew the Prince de Condé was in, and of the encroachments of the Guises. Anne de Montmorency, furious at learning that the Prince owed his life merely to the sudden illness of which Francis II. was dying, marched up with fifteen hundred horse and a hundred gentlemen under arms. The more effectually to surprise the Guises, he had avoided Paris, coming from Écouen to Corbeil, and from Corbeil to Pithiviers by the Valley of the Essonne

"Man to man, and both to pull, leaves each but little wool!" he said, on the occasion of this dashing advance.

Anne de Montmorency, who had been the preserver of France when Charles V. invaded Provence, and the Duc de Guise, who had checked the Emperor's second attempt at Metz, were, in fact, the two greatest French warriors of their time.

Catherine had waited for the right moment to stir up the hatred of the man whom the Guises had overthrown. The Marquis de Simeuse, in command of the town of Gien, on hearing of the advance of so considerable a force as the Connétable brought with him, sprang to horse, hoping to warn the Duke in time. The Queen-mother, meanwhile, certain that the Connétable would come to his nephew's rescue, and confident of the Chancellor's devotion to the royal cause, had fanned the hopes and encouraged the spirit of the Reformed party. The Colignys and the adherents of the imperiled House of Bourbon had made common cause with the Queen-mother's partisans; a coalition between various antagonistic interests, attacked by a common foe, was silently

formed in the Assembly of the States, where the question was boldly broached of making Catherine Regent of France in the event of the young King's death. Catherine herself, whose faith in astrology was far greater than her belief in Church dogmas, had ventured to extremes against her foes when she saw her son dying at the end of the time fixed as his term of life by the famous soothsayer brought to the château de Chaumont by Nostradamus.

A few days before the terrible close of his reign, Francis II. had chosen to go out on the Loire, so as not to be in the town at the hour of the Prince de Condé's intended execution. Having surrendered the Prince's head to the Cardinal de Lorraine, he feared a riot quite as much as he dreaded the supplications of the Princesse de Condé. As he was embarking, a fresh breeze, such as often sweeps the Loire at the approach of winter, gave him so violent an earache that he was forced to return home; he went to bed, never to leave it alive.

In spite of the disagreement of the physicians, who, all but Chapelain, were his enemies and opponents, Ambroise Paré maintained that an abscess had formed in the head, and that if no outlet were pierced the chances of the King's death were greater every day.

In spite of the late hour and the rigorous enforcement of the curfew at that time in Orleans, which was ruled as in a state of siege, Paré's lamp was shining in his window where he was studying. Lecamus called to him from below; and when he had announced his name, the surgeon gave orders that his old friend should be admitted.

"You give yourself no rest, Ambroise, and while saving the lives of others you will wear out your own," said the furrier as he went in.

Indeed, there sat the surgeon, his books open, his instruments lying about, and before him a skull not long since buried, dug up from the grave, and perforated.

"I must save the King."

"Then you are very sure you can, Ambroise?" said the old man, shuddering.

"As sure as I am alive. The King, my good old friend, has some evil humor festering on his brain, which will fill it up, and the danger is pressing; but by piercing the skull I let the matter out and free his head. I have already performed this operation three times; it was invented by a Piedmontese, and I have been so lucky as to improve upon it. The first time it was at the siege of Metz, on Monsieur de Pienne, whom I got out of the scrape, and who has only been all the wiser for it; the second time it saved the life of a poor man on whom I wished to test the certainty of this daring operation to which Monsieur de Pienne had submitted; the third time was on a gentleman in Paris, who is now perfectly well. Trepanning—for that is the name given to it—is as yet little known. The sufferers object to it on the score of the imperfection of the instrument, but that I have been able to improve. So now I am experimenting on this head, to be sure of not failing to-morrow on the King's."

"You must be very sure of yourself, for your head will be in danger if you——"

"I will wager my life that he is cured," replied Paré, with the confidence of genius. "Oh, my good friend, what is it to make a hole in a skull with due care? It is what soldiers do every day with no care at all."

"But do you know, my boy," said the citizen, greatly daring, "that if you save the King, you ruin France? Do you know that your instrument will place the crown of the Valois on the head of a Prince of Lorraine, calling himself the direct heir of Charlemagne? Do you know that surgery and politics are, at this moment, at daggers drawn? Yes, the triumph of your genius will be the overthrow of your religion. If the Guises retain the Regency, the blood of the Reformers will flow in streams! Be a great citizen rather than a great surgeon, and sleep through to-morrow morning, leaving the King's room free to those leeches who, if they do not save the King, will save France."

"I!" cried Paré. "I—leave a man to die when I can cure him? Never! If I am to be hanged for a Calvinist, I will

go to the château, all the same, right early to-morrow. Do not you know that the only favor I mean to ask, when I have saved the King, is your Christophe's life? There will surely be a moment when Queen Mary can refuse me nothing?"

"Alas, my friend, has not the little King already refused the Princesse de Condé any pardon for her husband? Do not kill your religion by enabling the man to live who ought to die."

"Are you going to puzzle yourself by trying to find out how God means to dispose of things in the future?" said Paré. "Honest folks have but one motto—'Do your duty, come what may.'—I did this at the siege of Calais when I set my foot on the Grand Master; I risked being cut down by all his friends and attendants, and here I am, surgeon to the King; I am a Reformer, and yet I can call the Guises my friends.—I will save the King!" cried the surgeon, with the sacred enthusiasm of conviction that genius knows, "and God will take care of France!"

There was a knock at the door, and a few minutes later one of Ambroise Paré's servants gave a note to Lecamus, who read aloud these ominous words:

"A scaffold is being erected at the Convent of the Récollets for the beheading of the Prince de Condé to-morrow."

Ambroise and Lecamus looked at each other, both overpowered with horror.

"I will go and make sure," said the furrier.

Out on the square, Ruggieri took Lecamus by the arm, asking what was Paré's secret for saving the King; but the old man, fearing some treachery, insisted on going to see the scaffold. So the astrologer and the furrier went together to the Récollets, where, in fact, they found carpenters at work by torchlight.

"Hey day, my friend," said Lecamus to one of them; "what business is this?"

"We are preparing to hang some heretics, since the bleeding at Amboise did not cure them," said a young friar, who was superintending the workmen.

"Monseigneur the Cardinal does well," said the prudent Ruggieri. "But in my country we do even better."

"What do you do?"

"We burn them, brother."

Lecamus was obliged to lean on the astrologer; his legs refused to carry him, for he thought that his son might next day be swinging to one of those gibbets. The poor old man stood between two sciences—astrology and medicine; each promised to save his son, for whom the scaffold was visibly rising. In this confusion of mind he was as wax in the hands of the Florentine.

"Well, my most respectable vendor of *vair,* what have you to say to these pleasantries of Lorraine?" said Ruggieri.

"Woe the day! You know I would give my own skin to see my boy's safe and sound."

"That is what I call talking like a skinner," replied the Italian. "But if you will explain to me the operation that Ambroise proposes to perform on the King, I will guarantee your son's life."

"Truly?" cried the old furrier.

"What shall I swear by?" said Ruggieri.

On this the unhappy old man repeated his conversation with Paré to the Italian, who was off, leaving the disconsolate father in the road the instant he had heard the great surgeon's secret.

"Whom the devil does he mean mischief to?" cried Lecamus, as he saw Ruggieri running at his utmost speed towards the Place de l'Estape.

Lecamus knew nothing of the terrible scene which was going on by the King's bedside, and which had led to the order being given for the erection of the scaffold for the Prince, who had been sentenced in default, as it were, though his execution was postponed for the moment by the King's illness.

There was no one in the hall, on the stairs, or in the court-yard of the Bailli's house but those on actual duty. The crowd of courtiers had resorted to the lodgings of the King of Navarre, who, by the law of the land, was Regent. The French nobles, terrified indeed by the insolence of the Guises, felt an impulse to close their ranks round the chief of the younger branch, seeing that the Queen-mother was subservient to the Guises, and not understanding her Italian policy. Antoine de Bourbon, faithful to his secret compact with Catherine, was not to renounce his claim to the regency in her favor till the States-General should have voted on the question.

This absolute desertion had struck the Grand Master when, on his return from a walk through the town—as a precautionary measure—he found no one about the King but the friends dependent on his fortunes. The room where Francis II.'s bed had been placed adjoins the great hall of the bailiff's residence, and was at that time lined with oak panelling. The ceiling, formed of narrow boards, skilfully adjusted and painted, showed an arabesque pattern in blue on a gold ground, and a piece of it, pulled down about fifty years ago, has been preserved by a collector of antiquities. This room, hung with tapestry, and the floor covered with a carpet, was so dark that the burning tapers scarcely gave it light. The enormous bedstead, with four columnar posts and silk curtains, looked like a tomb. On one side of the bed, by the King's pillow, were Queen Mary and the Cardinal de Lorraine; on the other sat Catherine in an armchair. The physician-in-ordinary, the famous Jean Chapelain, afterwards in attendance on Charles IX., was standing by the fireplace. Perfect silence reigned.

The young King, pale and slight, lost in the sheets, was hardly to be seen, with his small, puckered face on the pillow. The Duchesse de Guise, seated on a stool, was supporting Mary Stuart; and near Catherine, in a window recess, Madame de Fiesehi was watching the Queen-mother's looks and gestures, for she understood the perils of her position.

In the great hall, notwithstanding the late hour, Monsieur de Cypierre, the Duc d'Orléans' tutor, appointed to be governor of the town, occupied a chimney corner with the two Gondis. Cardinal de Tournon, who at this crisis had taken part with Queen Catherine, on finding himself treated as an inferior by the Cardinal de Lorraine, whose equal he undoubtedly was in the Church, was conversing in a low voice with the brothers Gondi. The Maréchal de Vieilleville and Monsieur de Saint-André, Keeper of the Seals, were discussing in whispers the imminent danger of the Guises.

The Duc de Guise crossed the hall, glancing hastily about him, and bowed to the Duc d'Orléans, whom he recognized.

"Monseigneur," said he, "this may give you a lesson in the knowledge of men. The Catholic nobility of the kingdom have crowded round a heretic prince, believing that the States assembled will place the Regency in the hands of the heir to the traitor who so long kept your illustrious grandfather a prisoner."

And after this speech, which was calculated to make a deep impression on the prince's mind, he went into the bedroom where the young King was lying, not so much asleep as heavily drowsy. As a rule, the Duc de Guise had the art of overcoming, by his affable expression, the sinister appearance of his scarred features; but at this moment he could not force a smile, seeing the instrument of power quite broken. The Cardinal, whose civic courage was equal to his brother's military valor, came forward a step or two to meet the Lieutenant-General.

"Robertet believes that little Pinard has been bought over by the Queen-mother," he said in his ear, as he led him back into the hall. "He has been made use of to work on the members of the Assembly."

"Bah! what matters our being betrayed by a secretary, when there is treason everywhere?" cried the Duke. "The town is for the Reformers, and we are on the eve of a revolt. Yes! the *Guépins* are malcontents," he added, giving the people of Orleans their common nickname, "and if Paré can-

not save the King, we shall see a desperate outbreak. Before long we shall have to lay siege to Orleans, which is a vermin's nest of Huguenots."

"In the last minute," said the Cardinal, "I have been watching that Italian woman, who sits there without a spark of feeling. She is waiting for her son's death, God forgive her!—I wonder whether it would not be well to arrest her and the King of Navarre too."

"It is more than enough to have the Prince de Condé in prison," replied the Duke.

The sound of a horse ridden at top-speed came up from the gate. The two Princes went to the window, and by the light of the gatekeeper's torch and of the cresset that was always burning under the gateway, the Duke recognized in the rider's hat the famous cross of Lorraine, which the Cardinal had made the badge of their partisans. He sent one of the men-at-arms, who stood in the ante-room, to say that the newcomer was to be admitted; and he went to the head of the stairs to meet him, followed by his brother.

"What is the news, my dear Simeuse?" asked the Duke, with the charming manner he always had for a soldier, as he recognized the Commandant of Gien.

"The Connétable is entering Pithiviers; he left Écouen with fifteen hundred horse and a hundred gentlemen——"

"Have they any following?" said the Duke.

"Yes, monseigneur," replied Simeuse. "There are two thousand six hundred of them in all. Some say that Thoré is behind with a troop of infantry. If Montmorency amuses himself with waiting for his son, you have time before you to undo him."

"And is that all you know? Are his motives for this rush to arms commonly reported?"

"Anne speaks as little as he writes; do you go and meet him, brother, while I will greet him here with his nephew's head," said the Cardinal, ordering an attendant to fetch Robertet.

"Vieilleville," cried the Duke to the Marshal, who came

in, "the Connétable de Montmorency has dared to take up arms. If I go out to meet him, will you be responsible for keeping order in the town?"

"The instant you are out of it, the townsfolk will rise; and who can foresee the issue of a fray between horsemen and citizens in such narrow streets?" replied the Marshal.

"My Lord!" said Robertet, flying up the stairs, "the Chancellor is at the gates, and insists on coming in; are we to admit him?"

"Yes, admit him," said the Cardinal de Lorraine. "The Constable and the Chancellor together would be too dangerous; we must keep them apart. We were finely tricked by the Queen-mother when we elected l'Hôpital to that office."

Robertet nodded to a captain who awaited the reply at the foot of the stairs, and returned quickly to take the Cardinal's orders.

"My Lord," said he, making a last effort, "I take the liberty of representing to you that the sentence requires the approval of the King in Council. If you violate the law for a Prince of the Blood, it will not be respected in favor of a Cardinal or of a Duc de Guise."

"Pinard has disturbed your mind, Robertet," said the Cardinal sternly. "Do you not know that the King signed the warrant on the day when he went out, leaving it to us to carry it out?"

"Though you are almost requiring my head of me when you give me this duty—which, however, will be that of the town-provost—I obey, my Lord."

The Grand Master heard the debate without wincing; but he took his brother by the arm, and led him to a corner of the hall.

"Of course," said he, "the direct heirs of Charlemagne have the right to take back the crown which was snatched from their family by Hugues Capet; but—can they? The pear is not ripe.—Our nephew is dying, and all the Court is gone over to the King of Navarre."

"The King's heart failed him: but for that, the Béarnais

would have been stabbed," replied the Cardinal, "and we could easily have disposed of the children."

"We are in a bad position here," said the Duke. "The revolt in the town will be supported by the States-General. L'Hôpital, whom we have befriended so well, and whose elevation Queen Catherine opposed, is now our foe, and we need the law on our side. The Queen-mother has too many adherents now to allow of our sending her away.—And besides, there are three more boys!"

"She is no longer a mother; she is nothing but a queen," said the Cardinal. "In my opinion, this is the very moment to be rid of her. Energy, and again energy! that is what I prescribe."

Having said this, the Cardinal went back into the King's room, and the Duke followed him. The prelate went straight up to Catherine.

"The papers found on La Sagne, the Prince de Condé's secretary, have been communicated to you," said he. "You know that the Bourbons mean to dethrone your children?"

"I know it all," said the Queen.

"Well, then, will you not have the King of Navarre arrested?"

"There is a Lieutenant-General of the kingdom," replied she.

At this moment Francis complained of the most violent pain in his ear, and began to moan lamentably. The physician left the fireplace, where he was warming himself, and came to examine the patient's head.

"Well, monsieur?" said the Grand Master, addressing him.

"I dare not apply a compress to draw the evil humors. Master Ambroise has undertaken to save his Majesty by an operation, and I should annoy him by doing so."

"Put it off till to-morrow," said Catherine calmly, "and be present, all of you medical men; for you know what calumnies the death of a prince gives ground for."

She kissed her son's hands and withdrew.

"How coolly that audacious trader's daughter can speak of

the Dauphin's death, poisoned as he was by Montecuculi, a Florentine of her suite!" cried Mary Stuart.

"Marie," said the little King, "my grandfather never cast a suspicion on her innocence."

"Cannot we hinder that woman from coming here to-morrow?" said the Queen in an undertone to her two uncles.

"What would become of us if the King should die?" replied the Cardinal. "Catherine would hurl us all into his grave."

And so that night the question stood plainly stated between Catherine de' Medici and the House of Lorraine. The arrival of the Chancellor and the Connétable de Montmorency pointed to rebellion, and the dawn of the morrow would prove decisive.

On the following day the Queen-mother was the first to appear. She found no one in her son's room but Mary Stuart, pale and fatigued from having passed the night in prayer by the bedside. The Duchesse de Guise had kept the Queen company, and the maids of honor had relieved each other. The young King was asleep.

Neither the Duke nor the Cardinal had yet appeared. The prelate, more daring than the soldier, had spent this last night, it is said, in vehement argument, without being able to induce the Duke to proclaim himself King. With the States-General sitting in the town, and the prospect of a battle to be fought with the Constable, the "Balafré" did not think the opportunity favorable; he refused to arrest the Queen-mother, the Chancellor, Cardinal de Tournon, the Gondis, Ruggieri, and Birague, in face of the revolt that would inevitably result from such violent measures. He made his brother's schemes dependent on the life of Francis II.

Perfect silence reigned in the King's bedchamber. Catherine, attended by Madame de Fieschi, came to the bedside and gazed at her son with an admirable assumption of grief. She held her handkerchief to her eyes, and retreated to the window, where Madame de Fieschi brought her a chair. From thence she could look down into the courtyard.

It had been agreed between Catherine and Cardinal de Tournon that if Montmorency got safely into the town, he, the Cardinal, would come to her, accompanied by the two Gondis; in case of disaster, he was to come alone. At nine in the morning the two Princes of Lorraine, accompanied by their suite, who remained in the hall, came to the King's room. The captain on duty had informed them that Ambroise Paré had but just arrived with Chapelain and three other physicians, prompted by Catherine, and all hating Ambroise.

In a few minutes the great hall of the Bailliage presented precisely the same appearance as the guardroom at Blois on the day when the Duc de Guise was appointed Lieutenant-General of the kingdom, and when Christophe was tortured; with only this difference, that then love and glee reigned in the royal rooms, and that the Guises were triumphant; whereas now death and grief prevailed, and the Princes of Lorraine felt the power slipping from their grasp.

The maids of honor of the two Queens were grouped on opposite sides of the great fireplace, where an immense fire was blazing. The room was full of courtiers.

The news, repeated no one knows by whom, of a bold plan of Ambroise Paré's for saving the King's life, brought in every gentleman who had any right to appear at Court. The outer steps of the house and the courtyard were thronged with anxious groups. The scaffold erected for the Prince, opposite the Convent of the Récollets, astonished all the nobles. People spoke in whispers, and here, as at Blois, the conversation was a medley of serious and frivolous subjects, of grave and trivial talk. They were beginning to feel used to turmoils, to sudden rebellion, to a rush to arms, to revolts, to the great and sudden events which marked the long period during which the House of Valois was dying out, in spite of Queen Catherine's efforts. Deep silence was kept for some distance outside the bedroom door, where two men-at-arms were on guard, with two pages, and the captain of the Scotch company.

Antoine de Bourbon, a prisoner in his lodgings, finding himself neglected, understood the hopes of the courtiers; he was overwhelmed at hearing of the preparations made during the night for his brother's execution.

In front of the hall fireplace stood one of the finest and grandest figures of his time, the Chancellor de l'Hôpital, in his crimson robes bordered with ermine, and wearing his square cap, in right of his office. This brave man, regarding his benefactors as the leaders of a rebellion, had espoused the cause of his king, as represented by the Queen-mother; and at the risk of his head he had gone to Écouen to consult the Connétable de Montmorency. No one dared to disturb the meditations in which he was plunged. Robertet, the Secretary of State, two marshals of France, Vieilleville and Saint-André, and the Keeper of the Seals, formed a group in front of the Chancellor.

The men of the Court were not actually laughing, but their tone was sprightly, especially among those who were disaffected to the Guises.

The Cardinal had at last secured Stuart, the Scotchman who had murdered President Minard, and was arranging for his trial at Tours. He had also confined in the châteaux of Blois and of Tours a considerable number of gentlemen who had seemed compromised, to inspire a certain degree of terror in the nobles; they, however, were not terrified, but saw in the Reformation a fulcrum for the love of resistance they derived from a feeling of their inborn equality with the King. Now, the prisoners at Blois had contrived to escape, and, by a singular fatality, those who had been shut up at Tours had just followed their example.

"Madame," said the Cardinal de Châtillon to Madame de Fiesehi, "if any one takes an interest in the prisoners from Tours, they are in the greatest danger."

On hearing this speech, the Chancellor looked round at the group of the elder Queen's maids of honor.

"Yes, for young Desvaux, the Prince de Condé's equerry, who was imprisoned at Tours, added a bitter jest to his escape.

He is said to have written a note to Messieurs de Guise to this effect:

"'We have heard of the escape of your prisoners at Blois; it has grieved us so much, that we are about to run after them; we will bring them back to you as soon as we have arrested them.'"

Though he relished this pleasantry, the Chancellor looked sternly at Monsieur de Châtillon.

At this instant louder voices were heard in the King's bedchamber. The two marshals, with Robertet and the Chancellor, went forward, for it was not merely a question of life and death to the King; everybody was in the secret of the danger to the Chancellor, to Catherine, and to her adherents. The silence that ensued was absolute.

Ambroise had examined the King; the moment seemed favorable for the operation; if it were not performed, he might die at any moment. As soon as the brothers de Guise came in, he explained to them the causes of the King's sufferings, and demonstrated that in such extremities trepanning was absolutely necessary. He only awaited the decision of the physicians.

"Pierce my son's skull as if it were a board, and with that horrible instrument!" cried Catherine de' Medici. "Maître Ambroise, I will not permit it."

The doctors were consulting, but Catherine spoke so loud that, as she intended, her words were heard in the outer room.

"But, madame, if that is the only hope of saving him?" said Mary Stuart, weeping.

"Ambroise," said Catherine, "remember that you answer for the King with your head."

"We are opposed to the means proposed by Maître Ambroise," said the three physicians. "The King may be saved by injecting a remedy into the ear which will release the humors through that passage."

The Duc de Guise, who was studying Catherine's face, suddenly went up to her, and led her into the window-bay.

"You, madame," said he, "wish your son to die; you are in collusion with your enemies, and that since we came from Blois. This morning Councillor Viole told your furrier's son that the Prince de Condé was to be beheaded. That young man, who, under torture, had denied all knowledge of the Prince de Condé, gave him a farewell greeting as he passed the window of the lad's prison. You looked on at your hapless accomplice's sufferings with royal indifference. Now, you are opposed to your eldest son's life being saved. You will force us to believe that the death of the Dauphin, which placed the crown on the head of the late King, was not natural, but that Montecuculi was your——"

"Monsieur le Chancelier!" Catherine called out, and at this signal Madame de Fieschi threw open the double doors of the bedchamber.

The persons assembled in the hall could thus see the whole scene in the King's room: the little King, deadly pale, his features sunk, his eyes dim, but repeating the word "Marie," while he held the hand of the young Queen, who was weeping; the Duchesse de Guise standing, terrified by Catherine's audacity; the two Princes of Lorraine, not less anxious, but keeping close to the Queen-mother, and resolved to have her arrested by Maillé-Brézé; and finally, the great surgeon Ambroise Paré, with the King's physician. He stood holding his instruments, but not daring to perform the operation, for which perfect quiet was as necessary as the approbation of the medical authorities.

"Monsieur le Chancelier," said Catherine, "Messieurs de Guise wish to authorize a strange operation on the King's person. Ambroise proposes to perforate his head. I, as his mother, and one of the commission of Regency, protest against what seems to me to be high treason. The three physicians are in favor of an injection which, to me, seems quite as efficacious and less dangerous than the cruel process recommended by Ambroise."

At these words there was a dull murmur in reply. The Cardinal admitted the Chancellor, and then shut the bedroom doors.

"But I am Lieutenant-General of the realm," said the Duc de Guise, "and you must understand, Monsieur le Chancelier, that Ambroise, surgeon to his Majesty, answers for the King's life."

"Well, since this is the state of affairs," said the great Ambroise Paré, "I know what to be doing."

He put out his arm over the bed.

"This bed and the King are mine," said he. "I constitute myself the sole master, and singly responsible; I know the duties of my office, and I will operate on the King without the physicians' sanction."

"Save him!" cried the Cardinal, "and you shall be the richest man in France."

"Only go on!" said Mary Stuart, pressing Paré's hand.

"I cannot interfere," said the Chancellor, "but I shall record the Queen-mother's protest."

"Robertet," the Duc de Guise called out.

Robertet came in, and the Duke pointed to the Chancellor.

"You are Chancellor of France," he said, "in the place of this felon. Monsieur de Maillé, take Monsieur de l'Hôpital to prison with the Prince de Condé.—As to you, madame," and he turned to Catherine, "your protest will not be recognized, and you would do well to remember that such actions need the support of adequate force. I am acting as a faithful and loyal subject of King Francis II., my sovereign.—Proceed, Ambroise," he said to the surgeon.

"Monsieur de Guise," said l'Hôpital, "if you use any violence, either on the person of the King or on that of his Chancellor, remember that in the hall without there is enough French nobility to arrest all traitors."

"Gentlemen, gentlemen," said the surgeon, "if you prolong this debate, you may as well shout 'Vive Charles IX.,' for King Francis is dying."

Catherine stood unmoved, looking out of window.

"Well, then, we will use force to remain masters in the King's bedroom," said the Cardinal, trying to keep the door; but he was startled and horrified, for the great hall was quite deserted. The Court, sure that the King was dying, had gone back to Antoine of Navarre.

"Come; do it, do it," cried Mary Stuart to Ambroise.—"I and you, Duchess," she said to Madame de Guise, "will protect you."

"Nay, madame," said Paré, "my zeal carried me too far; the doctors, with the exception of my friend Chapelain, are in favor of the injection; I must yield to them. If I were physician and surgeon-in-chief, he could be saved!—Give it me," he said, taking a small syringe from the hand of the chief physician, and filling it.

"Good God!" cried Mary Stuart; "I command you——"

"Alas! madame," replied Paré, "I am subordinate to these gentlemen."

The young Queen and the Duchesse de Guise stood between the surgeon and the doctors and the other persons present. The chief physician held the King's head, and Ambroise made the injection into the ear. The two Princes of Lorraine were watchful; Robertet and Monsieur de Maillé stood motionless. At a sign from Catherine, Madame de Fieschi left the room unnoticed. At the same instant l'Hôpital boldly threw open the door of the King's bedroom.

"I have arrived in the nick of time," exclaimed a man, whose hasty steps rang through the hall, and who, in another minute, was at the door of the King's room. "What, gentlemen! You thought to cut off my fine nephew, the Prince de Condé's head?—You have roused the lion from his lair, and here he is!" added the Connétable de Montmorency.—"Ambroise, you are not to stir up my King's brains with your instruments! The Kings of France do not allow themselves to be knocked about in that way unless by their enemies' sword in fair fight! The first Prince of the Blood, Antoine de Bourbon, the Prince de Condé, the Queen-mother, and the Chancellor are all opposed to the operation."

To Catherine's great satisfaction, the King of Navarre and the Prince de Condé both made their appearance.

"What is the meaning of this?" said the Duc de Guise, laying his hand on his poniard.

"As Lord High Constable, I have dismissed all the sentinels from their posts. Blood and thunder! we are not in an enemy's country, I suppose. The King our Master is surrounded by his subjects, and the States-General of the realm may deliberate in perfect liberty. I have just come from the Assembly, gentlemen; I laid before it the protest of my nephew de Condé, who has been rescued by three hundred gentlemen. You meant to let the royal blood, and to decimate the nobility of France. Henceforth I shall not trust anything you propose, Messieurs de Lorraine. And if you give the order for the King's head to be opened, by this sword, which saved France from Charles V., I say it shall not be done——!"

"All the more so," said Ambroise Paré, "because it is too late, suffusion has begun."

"Your reign is over, gentlemen," said Catherine to the two Guises, seeing from Paré's manner that there was now no hope.

"You, madame, have killed your son!" said Mary Stuart, springing like a lioness from the bed to the window, and seizing the Italian Queen by the arm with a vehement clutch.

"My dear," replied Catherine de' Medici, with a keen, cold look that expressed the hatred she had suppressed for six months past, "you, to whose violent passion this death is due, will now go to reign over your own Scotland—and you will go to-morrow. I am now Regent in fact as well as in name."

The three physicians had made a sign to the Queen-mother

"Gentlemen," she went on, addressing the Guises, "it is an understood thing between Monsieur de Bourbon—whom I hereby appoint Lieutenant-General of the kingdom—and myself that the conduct of affairs is our business.—Come, Monsieur le Chancelier."

"The King is dead!" said the Grand Master, obliged to carry out the functions of his office.

"God save King Charles IX.!" cried the gentlemen who had come with the King of Navarre, the Prince de Condé, and the Constable.

The ceremonies performed when a King of France dies were carried out in solitude. When the king-at-arms called out three times in the great hall, "The King is dead!" after the official announcement by the Duc de Guise, there were but a few persons present to answer—"God save the King!"

The Queen-mother, to whom the Countess Fieschi brought the Duc d'Orléans, now Charles IX., left the room leading the boy by the hand, and followed by the whole Court. Only the two Guises, the Duchesse de Guise, Mary Stuart, and Dayelle remained in the room where Francis II. had breathed his last, with two guards at the door, the Grand Master's pages and the Cardinal's, and their two private secretaries.

"Vive la France!" shouted some of the Reformers, a first cry of opposition.

Robertet, who owed everything to the Duke and the Cardinal, terrified by their schemes and their abortive attempts, secretly attached himself to the Queen-mother, whom the Ambassadors of Spain, England, the German Empire, and Poland met on the stairs, at their head Cardinal Tournon, who had gone to call them after looking up from the court-yard to Catherine de' Medici just as she was protesting against Ambroise Paré's operation.

"Well, the sons of Louis d'Outre-Mer, the descendants of Charles de Lorraine, have proved cravens," said the Cardinal to the Duke.

"They would have been packed off to Lorraine," replied his brother. "I declare to you, Charles," he went on, "if the crown were there for the taking, I would not put out my hand for it. That will be my son's task."

"Will he ever have the army and the Church on his side as you have?"

"He will have something better."

"What?"

"The people."

"And there is no one to mourn for him but me—the poor boy who loved me so well!" said Mary Stuart, holding the cold hand of her first husband.

"How can we be reconciled to the Queen?" said the Cardinal.

"Wait till she quarrels with the Huguenots," said the Duchess.

The clashing interests of the House of Bourbon, of Catherine, of the Guises, and of the Reformers produced such confusion in Orleans, that it was not till three days after that the King's body, quite forgotten where it lay, was placed in a coffin by obscure serving men, and carried to Saint-Denis in a covered vehicle, followed only by the Bishop of Senlis and two gentlemen. When this dismal little procession arrived at the town of Etampes, a follower of the Chancellor de l'Hôpital attached to the hearse this bitter inscription, which history has recorded: "Tanneguy du Chastel, where are you? Yet you too were French!" A stinging innuendo, striking at Catherine, Mary Stuart, and the Guises. For what Frenchman does not know that Tanneguy du Chastel spent thirty thousand crowns (a million of francs in these days) on the obsequies of Charles VII., the benefactor of his family?

As soon as the tolling bells announced the death of Francis II., and the Connétable de Montmorency had thrown open the gates of the town, Tourillon went up to his hayloft and made his way to a hiding-place.

"What, can he be dead?" exclaimed the glover.

On hearing the voice, a man rose and replied, *"Prêt à servir"* ("Ready to serve," or "Ready, aye ready"), the watchword of the Reformers of Calvin's sect.

This man was Chaudieu, to whom Tourillon related the events of the last week, during which he had left the preacher alone in his hiding-place, with a twelve-ounce loaf for his sole sustenance.

"Be off to the Prince de Condé, brother, ask him for a safe-conduct for me, and find me a horse," cried the preacher. "I must set out this moment."

"Write him a line then, that I may be admitted."

"Here," said Chaudieu, after writing a few lines, "ask for a pass from the King of Navarre, for under existing circumstances I must hasten to Geneva."

Within two hours all was ready, and the zealous minister was on his way to Geneva, escorted by one of the King of Navarre's gentlemen, whose secretary Chaudieu was supposed to be, and who was the bearer of instructions to the Reformed party in Dauphiné.

Chaudieu's sudden departure was at once permitted, to further the interests of Queen Catherine, who, to gain time, made a bold suggestion which was kept a profound secret. This startling scheme accounts for the agreement so unexpectedly arrived at between the Queen and the leaders of the Protestant party. The crafty woman had, as a guarantee of her good faith, expressed a desire to heal the breach between the two Churches in an assembly which could be neither a Synod, nor a Council, nor a Convocation, for which indeed a new name was needed, and, above all else, Calvin's consent. It may be said in passing, that, when this mystery came out, it led to the alliance of the Guises with the Connétable de Montmorency against Catherine and the King of Navarre—a strange coalition, known to history as the Triumvirate, because the Maréchal de Saint-André was the third person in this purely Catholic combination, to which Catherine's strange proposal for a meeting gave rise. The Guises were then enabled to judge very shrewdly of Catherine's policy; they saw that the Queen cared little enough for this assembly, and only wanted to temporize with her allies till Charles IX should be of age; indeed, they deceived Montmorency by making him believe in a collusion between Catherine and the Bourbons, while Catherine was taking them all in. The Queen, it will be seen, had in a short time made great strides.

The spirit of argument and discussion which was then in

the air was particularly favorable to this scheme. The Catholics and the Huguenots were all to shine in turn in this tournament of words. Indeed, that is exactly what happened. Is it not extraordinary that historians should have mistaken the Queen's shrewdest craft for hesitancy? Catherine never went more directly to the end she had in view than when she seemed to have turned her back on it. So the King of Navarre, incapable of fathoming Catherine's motives, despatched Chaudieu to Calvin; Chaudieu having secretly intended to watch the course of events at Orleans, where he ran, every hour, the risk of being seized and hanged without trial, like any man who had been condemned to banishment.

At the rate of traveling then possible Chaudieu could not reach Geneva before the month of February, the negotiations could not be completed till March, and the meeting could not be called till the beginning of May 1561. Catherine intended to amuse the Court meanwhile, and lull party-feeling by the King's coronation, and by his first Bed of Justice in the Parlement when l'Hôpital and de Thou passed the royal letter, by which Charles IX. intrusted the Government of the kingdom to his mother, seconded by Antoine de Navarre as Lieutenant-General of the realm—the weakest prince of his time.

Was it not one of the strangest things of that day to see a whole kingdom in suspense for the Yea or Nay of a French citizen, risen from obscurity, and living at Geneva? The Pope of Rome held in check by the Pope of Geneva? The two Princes of Lorraine, once so powerful, paralyzed by the brief concord between the first Prince of the Blood, the Queen-mother, and Calvin? Is it not one of the most pregnant lessons that history has preserved to kings, a lesson that should teach them to judge of men, to give genius its due without any hesitation, and to seek it out, as Louis XIV. did, wherever God has hidden it?

Calvin, whose real name was not Calvin, but Cauvin, was the son of a cooper at Noyon, in Picardy. Calvin's birth-

place accounts to a certain degree for the obstinacy mingled with eccentric irritability which characterized the arbiter of the destinies of France in the sixteenth century. No one is less known than this man, who was the maker of Geneva and of the spirit of its people. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who knew little of history, was utterly ignorant of this man's influence on his Republic.

At first, indeed, Calvin, dwelling in one of the humblest houses in the upper town, near the Protestant Church of Saint-Pierre, over a carpenter's shop—one point of resemblance between him and Robespierre—had no great authority in Geneva. His influence was for a long time checked by the hatred of the Genevese.

In the sixteenth century Geneva could boast of Farel, one of those famous citizens who have remained unknown to the world, some of them even to Geneva itself. In the year 1537, or thereabouts, this Farel attached Calvin to Geneva by pointing out to him that it might become the stronghold of a reformation more thorough than that of Luther. Farel and Cauvin looked on Lutheranism as an incomplete achievement, ineffectual, and with no hold on France. Geneva, lying between France and Italy, speaking the French tongue, was admirably placed for communicating with Germany, Italy, and France. Calvin adopted Geneva as the seat of his spiritual fortunes, and made it the citadel of his dogmas. At Farel's request, the town council of Geneva authorized Calvin to lecture on theology in the month of September 1538. Calvin left preaching to Farel, his first disciple, and patiently devoted himself to teaching his doctrine. His authority, which in later years of his life was paramount, took long to establish. The great leader met with serious difficulties; he was even banished from Geneva for some time in consequence of the austerity of his doctrines. There was a party of very good folk who clung to the old luxury and customs of their fathers. But, as is always the case, these worthy people dreaded ridicule: they would not admit what was the real object of their struggles, and the battle was fought over details apart from the real question.

Calvin insisted on leavened bread being used for the Sacrament, and on there being no holy days but Sunday. These innovations were disapproved of at Berne and at Lausanne. The Genevese were required to conform to the ritual of Switzerland. Calvin and Farel resisted; their political enemies made a pretext of this refractoriness to exile them from Geneva, whence they were banished for some years. At a later period Calvin came back in triumph, invited by his flock.

Such persecution is always a consecration of moral power when the prophet can wait. And this return was the era of this Mahomet. Executions began, and Calvin organized his religious Terror. As soon as this commanding spirit reappeared, he was admitted to the citizenship of Geneva; but after fourteen years' residence there, he was not yet on the Council. At the time when Catherine was despatching a minister to treat with him, this king in the realm of thought had no title but that of Pastor of the Church of Geneva. Indeed, Calvin never had more than a hundred and fifty francs a year in money, fifteen hundred-weight of corn and two casks of wine for his whole remuneration. His brother, a tailor, kept a shop a few paces away from the Place Saint-Pierre, in a street where one of Calvin's printing-places may still be seen.

Such disinterestedness, which in Voltaire and Baker was lacking, but which is conspicuous in the life of Rabelais, of Campanella, of Luther, of Vico, of Descartes, of Malebranche, of Spinoza, of Loyola, of Kant, and of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, surely forms a noble setting for these sublime and ardent souls.

Robespierre's life, so like that of Calvin, can alone perhaps enable our contemporaries to understand Calvin's. He founding his power on a similar basis, was as cruel and as tyrannical as the Arras lawyer. It is strange too that Picardy—Arras and Noyon—should have given to the world these two great instruments of reform. Those who examine into the motives of the executions ordered by Calvin will find,

on a different scale, no doubt, all of 1793 at Geneva. Calvin had Jacques Gruet beheaded "for having written impious letters and worldly verse, and labored to overthrow Church ordinances." Just consider this sentence, and ask yourself if the worst despotism can show in its annals a more absurdly preposterous indictment.

Valentin Gentilis, condemned to death for involuntary heresy, escaped the scaffold only by making more humiliating amends than ever were inflicted by the Catholic Church. Seven years before the conference presently to be held in Calvin's house on the Queen-mother's proposals, Michel Servet (or Servetus), a Frenchman, passing through Geneva, was put in prison, tried, condemned on Calvin's testimony, and burned alive for having attacked the mystery of the Trinity in a work which had not been either composed or printed at Geneva. Compare with this the eloquent defence of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, whose book, attacking the Catholic religion, written in France and published in Holland, was indeed burned by the hand of the executioner; but the writer, a foreigner, was only banished from the kingdom, where he had been trying to strike at the fundamental truths of religion and government; and compare the conduct of the Parlement with that of the Genevese tyrant.

Bolsée, again, was brought to judgment for having other ideas than Calvin on the subject of predestination. Weigh all this, and say whether Fouquier-Tinville did anything worse. Calvin's fierce religious intolerance was, morally speaking, more intense, more implacable, than the fierce political intolerance of Robespierre. On a wider stage than was offered by Geneva, Calvin would have shed more blood than the terrible apostle of political equality, as compared with Catholic equality.

Three centuries earlier a monk, also a son of Picardy, had led the whole of Western Europe to invade the East. Peter the Hermit, Calvin, and Robespierre, sons of the same soil, at intervals of three centuries, were, in a political sense, the levers of Archimedes. Each in turn was an embodied idea finding its fulcrum in the interests of man.

Calvin is, beyond doubt, the—almost unrecognized—maker of that dismal town of Geneva, where, only ten years since, a man, pointing out a carriage gate—the first in the town, for till then there had only been house doors in Geneva—said, "Through that gate luxury drove into Geneva." Calvin, by the severity of his sentences and the austerity of his doctrine, introduced the hypocritical feeling that has been well called Puritanism [the nearest English equivalent perhaps to the French word *mômerie*]. Good conduct, according to the *mômiers* or puritans, lay in renouncing the arts and the graces of life, in eating well but without luxury, and in silently amassing money without enjoying it otherwise than as Calvin enjoyed his power—in fancy.

Calvin clothed the citizens in the same gloomy livery as he threw over life in general. He formed in the Consistory a perfect Calvinist inquisition, exactly like the revolutionary tribunal instituted by Robespierre. The Consistory handed over the victims to be condemned by the Council, which Calvin ruled through the Consistory just as Robespierre ruled the Convention through the Jacobin Club. Thus an eminent magistrate of Geneva was sentenced to two months' imprisonment, to lose his office, and to be prohibited from ever filling any other, because he led a dissolute life and had made friends among Calvin's foes. In this way Calvin was actually a legislator; it was he who created the austere manners, sober, respectable, hideously dull, but quite irreproachable, which have remained unchanged in Geneva to this day; they prevailed there indeed before the English habits were formed that are universally known as Puritanism, under the influence of the Cameronians, the followers of Caméron, a Frenchman who trod in Calvin's steps. These manners have been admirably described by Walter Scott.

The poverty of this man, an absolute sovereign, who treated as a power with other powers, asking for their treasure, demanding armies, and filling his hands with their money for the poor, proves that the Idea, regarded as the sole means of dominion, begets political misers, men whose only en-

joyment is intellectual, and who, like the Jesuits, love power for its own sake. Pitt, Luther, Calvin, and Robespierre, all these *Harpagons* in greed of dominion, died penniless. History has preserved the inventory made in Calvin's rooms after his death, and everything, including his books, was valued at fifty crowns. Luther's possessions amounted to as much; indeed, his widow, the famous Catherine de Bora, was obliged to petition for a pension of fifty crowns bestowed on her by a German Elector.

Potemkin, Mazarin, and Richelieu, men of thought and action, who all three founded or prepared the foundations of empires, each left three hundred millions of francs; but these men had a heart, they loved women and the arts, they built and conquered; while, with the exception of Luther, whose wife was the Helen of this Iliad, none of the others could accuse himself of ever having felt his heart throb for a woman.

This brief history was needed to explain Calvin's position at Geneva.

One day early in February 1561, on one of the mild evenings which occur at that time of year on the shores of Lake Léman, two men on horseback arrived at Pré-l'Évêque, so called from the ancient residence of the Bishop of Geneva, driven out thirty years before. These two men, acquainted, no doubt, with the law of Geneva as to the closing of the gates, very necessary then, and absurd enough in these days, rode towards the Porte de Rives; but they suddenly drew rein at the sight of a man of fifty, walking with the help of a woman-servant's arm, and evidently returning to the town. This personage, rather stout in figure, walked slowly and with difficulty, dragging one foot before the other with evident pain, and wearing broad, laced shoes of black velvet.

"It is he," said Chaudieu's companion, who dismounted, gave his bridle to the preacher, and went forward open-armed to meet the master.

The man on foot, who was in fact Jean Calvin, drew back to avoid the embrace, and cast the severest glance at his dis-

ciple. At the age of fifty Calvin looked like a man of seventy. Thick-set and fat, he seemed all the shorter because frightful pain from the stone obliged him to walk much bent. These sufferings were complicated with attacks of the worst form of gout. Anybody might have quaked at the aspect of that face, almost as broad as it was long, and bearing no more signs of good-nature, in spite of its roundness, than that of the dreadful King Henry VIII., whom Calvin, in fact, resembled. His sufferings, which never gave him a reprieve, were visible in two deep furrows on each side of his nose, following the line of his moustache, and ending, like it, in a full gray beard.

This face, though red and inflamed like a drunkard's, showed patches where his complexion was yellow; still, and in spite of the velvet cap that covered his massive, broad head, it was possible to admire a large and nobly formed forehead, and beneath it two sparkling brown eyes, which in moments of wrath could flash fire. Whether by reason of his bulk, or because his neck was too thick and short, or as a consequence of late hours and incessant work, Calvin's head seemed sunk between his broad shoulders, which compelled him to wear a quite shallow, pleated ruff, on which his face rested like John the Baptist's in the charger. Between his moustache and his beard there peeped, like a rose, a sweet and eloquent mouth, small, and fresh, and perfectly formed. This face was divided by a square nose remarkable for its long aquiline outline, resulting in high-lights at the tip, significantly in harmony with the prodigious power expressed in this magnificent head.

Though it was difficult to detect in these features any trace of the constant headaches which tormented Calvin in the intervals of a slow fever that was consuming him, pain, constantly defied by study and a strong will, gave this apparently florid face a terrible tinge, attributable, no doubt, to the hue of the layer of fat due to the sedentary habits of a hard worker. It bore the marks of the perpetual struggle of a sickly temperament against one of the strongest wills

known in the history of mankind. Even the lips, though beautiful, expressed cruelty. A chaste life, indispensable to vast projects, and compulsory in such conditions of sickly health, had set its stamp on the face. There was regret in the serenity of that mighty brow, and suffering in the gaze of the eyes, whose calmness was a terror.

Calvin's dress gave effect to his head, for he wore the famous black cloth gown, belted with a cloth band and brass buckle, which was adopted as the costume of Calvinist preachers, and which, having nothing to attract the eye, directed all the spectator's attention to the face.

"I am in too great pain to embrace you, Théodore," said Calvin to the elegant horseman.

Théodore de Bèze, at that time two-and-forty, and, by Calvin's desire, a free citizen of Geneva for two years past, was the most striking contrast to the terrible minister to whom he had given his allegiance. Calvin, like all men of the middle class who have risen to moral supremacy, like all inventors of a social system, was consumed with jealousy. He abhorred his disciples, would suffer no equal, and could not endure the slightest contradiction. However, between him and Théodore de Bèze the difference was so great; this elegant gentleman, gifted with a charming appearance, polished, courteous, and accustomed to Court life, was, in his eyes, so unlike all his fierce Janissaries, that for him he set aside his usual impulses. He never loved him, for this crabbed lawgiver knew absolutely nothing of friendship; but having no fear of finding his successor in him, he liked to play with Théodore, as Richelieu at a later time played with his cat. He found him pliant and amusing. When he saw that de Bèze succeeded to perfection in every mission, he took delight in the polished tool of which he believed himself to be the soul and guide; so true is it that even those men who seem most surly cannot live without some semblance of affection.

Théodore was Calvin's spoilt child. The great Reformer never scolded him, overlooked his irregularities, his love

affairs, his handsome dress, and his choice language. Possibly Calvin was well content to show that the Reformation could hold its own even among Court circles. Théodore de Bèze wanted to introduce a taste for art, letters, and poetry into Geneva, and Calvin would listen to his schemes without knitting his grizzled brows. Thus the contrast of character and person was as complete as the contrast of mind in these two celebrated men.

Calvin accepted Chaudieu's very humble bow, and replied by slightly bending his head. Chaudieu slipped the bridles of both horses over his right arm and followed the two great Reformers, keeping on the right of Théodore de Bèze, who was walking on Calvin's right. Calvin's housekeeper ran forward to prevent the gate being shut, by telling the captain of the Guard that the Pastor had just had a severe attack of pain.

Théodore de Bèze was a native of the Commune of Vézelay, the first to demand for itself corporate government, of which the curious tale has been told by one of the Thierrys. Thus the spirit of citizenship and resistance which were endemic at Vézelay no doubt contributed an item to the great rising of the Reformers in the person of this man, who is certainly a most singular figure in the history of heresy.

"So you still suffer great pain?" said Théodore to Calvin.

"The sufferings of the damned, a Catholic would say," replied the Reformer, with the bitterness that colored his least remarks. "Ah! I am going fast, my son, and what will become of you when I am gone?"

"We will fight by the light of your writings," said Chaudieu.

Calvin smiled; his purple face assumed a more gracious expression, and he looked kindly on Chaudieu.

"Well, have you brought me any news?" he asked. "Have they killed a great many of us?" he added, with a smile, and a sort of mocking glee sparkled in his brown eyes.

"No," said Chaudieu; "peace is the order of the day."

"So much the worse, so much the worse!" cried Calvin.

"Every form of peace would be a misfortune if it were not always, in fact, a snare. Our strength lies in persecution. Where should we be if the Church took up the Reformation?"

"Indeed," said Théodore, "that is what the Queen-mother seems inclined to do."

"She is quite capable of it," said Calvin. "I am studying that woman."

"From hence?" cried Chaudieu.

"Does distance exist for the spirit?" said Calvin severely, regarding the interruption as irreverent. "Catherine longs for power, and women who aim at that lose all sense of honor and faith.—What is in the wind?"

"Well, she suggests a sort of Council," said Théodore de Bèze.

"Near Paris?" asked Calvin roughly.

"Yes."

"Ah! that is well!" said Calvin.

"And we are to try to come to an understanding, and draw up a public Act to consolidate the two Churches."

"Ah! if only she had courage enough to separate the French Church from the Court of Rome, and to create a patriarch in France, as in the Greek Church!" cried the Reformer, whose eyes glistened at this idea, which would place him on a throne. "But, my son, can a Pope's niece be truthful? She only wants to gain time."

"And do not we need time to recover from our check at Amboise, and to organize some formidable resistance in various parts of the kingdom?"

"She has sent away the Queen of Scotland," said Chaudieu.

"That is one less, then," said Calvin, as they passed through the Porte de Rives. "Elizabeth of England will keep her busy. Two neighboring queens will soon be fighting; one is handsome, and the other ugly enough—a first cause of irritation; and then there is the question of legitimacy——"

He rubbed his hands, and his glee had such a ferocious taint that de Bèze shuddered, for he too saw the pool of blood at which his master was gazing.

"The Guises have provoked the House of Bourbon," said de Bèze after a pause; "they broke the stick between them at Orleans."

"Ay," said Calvin; "and you, my son, did not believe me when, as you last started for Nérac, I told you that we should end by stirring up war to the death between the two branches of the royal family in France.

"So at last I have a court, a king, a dynasty on my side. My doctrine has had its effect on the masses. The citizen class understand me; henceforth they will call those who go to Mass idolaters, those who paint the walls of their place of worship, and put up pictures and statues there. Oh, the populace find it far easier to demolish cathedrals and palaces than to discuss justification by faith or the real presence! Luther was a wrangler, I am an army! He was a reasoner, I am a system! He, my child, was but a tormentor, I am a Tarquin!

"Yes, they of the truth will destroy churches, will tear down pictures, will make millstones of the statues to grind the bread of the people. There are bodies in great States, I will have only individuals; bodies are too resistant, and see clearly when individuals are blind.

"Now, we must combine this agitating doctrine with political interests, to consolidate it and to keep up the material of my armies. I have satisfied the logic of thrifty minds and thinking brains by this bare, undecorated worship which lifts religion into the sphere of the ideal. I have made the mob understand the advantages of the suppression of ceremonial.

"Now it is your part, Théodore, to enlist people's interests. Do not overstep that line. In the way of doctrine everything has been done, everything has been said; add not one jot! Why does Caméron, that little *pasteur* in Gascony, meddle with writing?"

Calvin, Théodore de Bèze, and Chaudieu went along the streets of the upper town and through the crowd, without any attention being paid to the men who were unchaining the

mob in cities and ravaging France. After this terrifying harangue, they walked on in silence, till they reached the little square of Saint-Pierre, and made their way towards the minister's dwelling. Calvin's lodging consisted of three rooms on the second floor of this house, which is hardly known, and of which no one ever tells you in Geneva—where, indeed, there is no statue to Calvin. The rooms were floored and wainscoted with pine, and on one side there were a kitchen and a servant's room. The entrance, as is commonly the case in Genevese houses, was through the kitchen, which opened into a small room with two windows, parlor, dining, and drawing-room in one. Next to this was the study where, for fourteen years, Calvin's mind had carried on the battle with pain, and beyond was his bedroom. Four oak chairs with tapestry seats, placed round a long table, formed all the furniture of the sitting-room. A white earthenware stove in one corner of the room gave out a pleasant warmth; paneling of unvarnished pine covered the walls, and there was no other decoration. The bareness of the place was quite in keeping with the frugal and simple life led by the Reformer.

"Well," said de Bèze, as he went in, taking advantage of a few minutes when Chaudieu had left them to put up the horses at a neighboring inn, "what am I to do? Will you agree to this meeting?"

"Certainly," said Calvin. "You, my son, will bear the brunt of the struggle. Be decisive, absolute. Nobody, neither the Queen, nor the Guises, nor I want pacification as a result; it would not suit our purpose. I have much confidence in Duplessis-Mornay. Give him the leading part. We are alone——" said he, with a suspicious glance into the kitchen, of which the door was open, showing two shirts and some collars hung to dry on a line. "Go and shut all the doors.—Well," he went on, when Théodore had done his bidding, "we must compel the King of Navarre to join the Guises and the Connétable de Montmorency, by advising him to desert Queen Catherine de' Medici. Let us take full ad-

vantage of his weakness; he is but a poor creature. If he prove a turncoat to the Italian woman, she, finding herself bereft of his support, must inevitably join the Prince de Condé and Coligny. Such a manœuvre may possibly compromise her so effectually that she must remain on our side——"

Théodore de Bèze raised the hem of Calvin's gown and kissed it.

"Oh, master," said he, "you are indeed great!"

"Unfortunately, I am dying, my dear Théodore. If I should die before seeing you again," he went on, whispering in the ear of his Minister for Foreign Affairs, "remember to strike a great blow by the hand of one of our martyrs."

"Another Minard to be killed?"

"Higher than a lawyer."

"A king!"

"Higher still. The man who wants to be king."

"The Duc de Guise?" cried Théodore, with a gesture of dismay.

"Well," cried Calvin, fancying that he discerned refusal, or at least an instinct of resistance, and failing to notice the entrance of Chaudieu, "have we not a right to strike as we are struck? Yes, and in darkness and silence! May we not return wound for wound, and death for death? Do the Catholics hesitate to lay snares for us and kill us? I trust to you! Burn their churches. Go on, my sons! If you have any devoted youths——"

"I have," Chaudieu put in.

"Use them as weapons of war. To triumph, we may use every means. The Balafré, that terrible man of war, is, like me, more than a man; he is a dynasty, as I am a system; he is capable of annihilating us! Death to the Duc de Guise!"

"I should prefer a peaceful victory, brought about by time and reason," said de Bèze.

"By time!" cried Calvin, flinging over his chair. "By reason! Are you mad? Conquer by reason? Do you know nothing of men, you who live among them—idiot? What

is so fatal to my teaching, thrice-dyed simpleton, is that it is based on reason. By the thunders of Saint Paul, by the sword of the Mighty! Pumpkin as you are, Théodore, cannot you see the power that the catastrophe at Amboise has given to my reforms? Ideas can never grow till they are watered with blood. The murder of the Duc de Guise would give rise to a fearful persecution, and I hope for it with all my might! To us reverses are more favorable than success! The Reformation can be beaten and endure, do you hear, oaf? Whereas Catholicism is overthrown if we win a single battle.

"What are these lieutenants of mine? Wet rags and not men! Guts on two legs! Christened baboons! O God, wilt Thou not grant me another ten years to live? If I die too soon, the cause of religion is lost in the hands of such rascals!

"You are as helpless as Antoine de Navarre! Begone! leave me! I must have a better messenger! You are an ass, a popinjay, a poet! Go, write your Catullics, your Tibullics, your acrostics! Hoo!"

The pain he suffered was entirely swamped by the fires of his wrath. Gout vanished before this fearful excitement. Calvin's face was blotched with purple, like the sky before a storm. His broad forehead shone. His eyes flashed fire. He was not like the same man. He let himself give way to this sort of epileptic frenzy, almost madness, which was habitual with him; but, then, struck by the silence of his two listeners, and observing Chaudieu, who said to de Bèze, "The burning bush of Horeb!" the minister sat down, was dumb, and covered his face with his hands, with their thickened joints, and his fingers quivered in spite of their strength.

A few minutes later, while still trembling from the last shocks of this tempest—the result of his austere life—he said in a broken voice:

"My vices, which are many, are less hard to subdue than my impatience! Ah! wild beast, shall I never conquer you?" he exclaimed, striking his breast.

"My beloved master," said de Bèze in a caressing tone, taking his hands and kissing them, "Jove thunders, but he can smile."

Calvin looked at his disciple with a softened expression.

"Do not misunderstand me, my friends," he said.

"I understand that the shepherds of nations have terrible burdens to bear," replied Théodore. "You have a world on your shoulders."

"I," said Chaudieu, who had become thoughtful under the master's abuse, "have three martyrs on whom we can depend Stuart, who killed the President, is free——"

"That will not do," said Calvin mildly, and smiling, as a great man can smile when fair weather follows a storm on his face, as if he were ashamed of the tempest. "I know men. He who kills one President will not kill a second."

"Is it absolutely necessary?" said de Bèze.

"What, again?" cried Calvin, his nostrils expanding. "There, go; you will put me in a rage again. You have my decision.—You, Chaudieu, walk in your own path, and keep the Paris flock together. God be with you.—Dinah! Light my friends out."

"Will you not allow me to embrace you?" said de Bèze with emotion. "Who can tell what the morrow will bring forth? We may be imprisoned in spite of safe-conducts——"

"And yet you want to spare them!" said Calvin, embracing de Bèze.

He took Chaudieu's hand, saying:

"Mind you, not Huguenots, not Reformers: be Calvinists! Speak only of Calvinism.—Alas! this is not ambition, for I am a dying man!—Only, everything of Luther's must be destroyed, to the very names of Lutheran and Lutheranism."

"Indeed, divine man, you deserve such honor!" cried Chaudieu.

"Uphold uniformity of creed. Do not allow any further examination or reconstruction. If new sects arise from among us, we are lost."

To anticipate events and dismiss Théodore de Bèze, who returned to Paris with Chaudieu, it may be said that Poltrot, who, eighteen months later, fired a pistol at the Duc de Guise, confessed, under torture, that he had been urged to the crime

by Théodore de Bèze; however, he retracted his statement at a later stage. Indeed, Bossuet, who weighed all the historical evidence, did not think that the idea of this attempt was due to Théodore de Bèze. Since Bossuet, however, a dissertation of an apparently trivial character, *à propos* to a famous ballad, enabled a compiler of the eighteenth century to prove that the song sung throughout France by the Huguenots on the death of the Duc de Guise was written by Théodore de Bèze; and, moreover, that the well-known ballad or lament on Malbrouck—the Duke of Marlborough—is plagiarized from Théodore de Bèze.*

On the day when Théodore de Bèze and Chaudieu reached Paris, the Court had returned thither from Reims, where Charles IX. had been crowned. This ceremony, to which Catherine gave unusual splendor, making it the occasion of great festivities, enabled her to gather round her the leaders of every faction.

After studying the various parties and interests, she saw a choice of two alternatives—either to enlist them on the side of the Throne, or to set them against each other. The Connétable de Montmorency, above all else a Catholic, whose nephew, the Prince de Condé, was the leader of the Reformation, and whose children also had a leaning to that creed, blamed the Queen-mother for allying herself with that party. The Guises, on their side, worked hard to gain over Antoine de Bourbon, a Prince of no strength of character, and attach him to their faction, and his wife, the Queen of Navarre, informed by de Bèze, allowed this to be done. These difficulties checked Catherine, whose newly-acquired authority needed a brief period of tranquillity; she impatiently awaited Calvin's reply by de Bèze and Chaudieu, sent to the great Reformer on behalf of the Prince de Condé, the King of Navarre, Coligny, d'Andelot, and Cardinal de Châtillon.

Meanwhile, the Queen-mother was true to her promises to the Prince de Condé. The Chancellor quashed the trial,

*See note at the end of this volume.

in which Christophe was involved, by referring the case to the Paris Parlement, and they annulled the sentence pronounced by the Commission, declaring it incompetent to try a Prince of the Blood. The Parlement re-opened the trial by the desire of the Guises and the Queen-mother. La Sagne's papers had been placed in Catherine's hands, and she had burnt them. This sacrifice was the first pledge given, quite vainly, by the Guises to the Queen-mother. The Parlement not having this decisive evidence, reinstated the Prince in all his rights, possessions, and honors.

Christophe, thus released when Orleans was in all its excitement over the King's accession, was excluded from the case, and, as a compensation for his sufferings, was passed as a pleader by Monsieur de Thou.

The Triumvirate—the coalition of interests which were imperiled by Catherine's first steps in authority—was hatching under her very eyes. Just as in chemistry hostile elements fly asunder at the shock that disturbs their compulsory union, so in politics the alliance of antagonistic interests can never last long. Catherine fully understood that, sooner or later, she must fall back on the Connétable and the Guises to fight the Huguenots. The convocation, which served to flatter the vanity of the orators on each side, and as an excuse for another imposing ceremony after that of the coronation, to clear the blood-stained field for the religious war that had, indeed, already begun, was as futile in the eyes of the Guises as it was in Catherine's. The Catholics could not fail to be the losers; for the Huguenots, under the pretence of discussion, would be able to proclaim their doctrine in the face of all France, under the protection of the King and his mother. The Cardinal de Lorraine, flattered by Catherine into the hope of conquering the heretics by the eloquence of the Princes of the Church, induced his brother to consent. To the Queen-mother six months of peace meant much.

A trivial incident was near wrecking the power which Catherine was so laboriously building up. This is the scene as recorded by history; it occurred on the very day when the

envoys from Geneva arrived at the Hôtel de Coligny in the Rue Béthisy, not far from the Louvre. At the coronation, Charles IX., who was much attached to his instructor, Amyot, made him High Almoner of France. This affection was fully shared by the Duc d'Anjou (Henri III.), who also was Amyot's pupil.

Catherine heard this from the two Gondis on the way home from Reims to Paris. She had relied on this Crown appointment to gain her a supporter in the Church, and a person of importance to set against the Cardinal de Lorraine; she had intended to bestow it on Cardinal de Tournon, so as to find in him, as in l'Hôpital, a second crutch—to use her own words. On arriving at the Louvre, she sent for the preceptor. Her rage at seeing the catastrophe that threatened her policy from the ambition of this self-made man—the son of a shoemaker—was such that she addressed him in this strange speech recorded by certain chroniclers:

"What! I can make the Guises cringe, the Colignys, the Montmorencys, the House of Navarre, the Prince de Condé, and I am to be balked by a priestling like you, who were not content to be Bishop of Auxerre!"

Amyot excused himself. He had, in fact, asked for nothing; the King had appointed him of his own free will to this office, of which he, a humble teacher, regarded himself as unworthy.

"Rest assured, Master," for it was by this name that the Kings Charles IX. and Henri III. addressed this great writer, "that you will not be left standing for twenty-four hours unless you induce your pupil to change his mind."

Between death promised him in such an uncompromising way, and the abdication of the highest ecclesiastical office in the kingdom, the shoemaker's son, who had grown covetous, and hoped perhaps for a Cardinal's hat, determined to temporize. He hid in the abbey of Saint-Germain en Laye.

At his first dinner, Charles IX., not seeing Amyot, asked for him. Some Guisard, no doubt, told the King what had passed between Amyot and the Queen-mother.

"What!" cried he, "has he been made away with because I created him High Almoner?"

He went off to his mother in the violent state of a child when one of his fancies is contravened.

"Madame," said he, as he entered her room, "did I not comply with your wishes, and sign the letter you asked of me for the Parlement, by virtue of which you govern my kingdom? Did you not promise me, when you laid it before me, that my will should be yours? and now the only favor I have cared to bestow excites your jealousy.—The Chancellor talks of making me of age at fourteen, three years from hence, and you treat me as a child!—By God, but I mean to be King, and as much a King as my father and grandfather were kings!"

The tone and vehemence with which he spoke these words were a revelation to Catherine of her son's true character; it was like a blow from a bludgeon on her heart.

"And he speaks thus to me," thought she, "to me, who made him King."—"Monsieur," she said, "the business of being King in such times as these is a difficult one, and you do not yet know the master minds you have to deal with. You will never have any true and trustworthy friend but your mother, or other adherents than those whom she long since attached to her, and but for whom you would perhaps not be alive at this day. The Guises are averse both to your position and your person, I would have you know. If they could sew me up in a sack and throw me into the river," said she, pointing to the Seine, "they would do it to-night. Those Lorrainers feel that I am a lioness defending her cubs, and that stays the bold hands they stretch out to clutch the crown. To whom, to what is your preceptor attached? where are his allies? what is his authority? what services can he do you? what weight will his words have? Instead of gaining a buttress to uphold your power, you have undermined it.

"The Cardinal de Lorraine threatens you; he plays the King, and keeps his hat on his head in the presence of the first Prince of the Blood; was it not necessary to counter-

balance him with another cardinal, invested with authority equal to his own? Is Amyot, a shoemaker who might tie the bows of his shoes, the man to defy him to his face?—Well, well, you are fond of Amyot. You have appointed him! Your first decision shall be respected, my Lord! But before deciding any further, have the kindness to consult me. Listen to reasons of State, and your boyish good sense will perhaps agree with my old woman's experience before deciding, when you know all the difficulties."

"You must bring back my master!" said the King, not listening very carefully to the Queen, on finding her speech full of reproofs.

"Yes, you shall have him," replied she. "But not he, nor even that rough Cypierre, can teach you to reign."

"It is you, my dear mother," he exclaimed, mollified by his triumph, and throwing off the threatening and sly expression which Nature had stamped on his physiognomy.

Catherine sent Gondi to find the High Almoner. When the Florentine had discovered Amyot's retreat, and the Bishop heard that the courtier came from the Queen, he was seized with terror, and would not come out of the Abbey. In this extremity Catherine was obliged to write to him herself, and in such terms that he came back and obtained the promise of her support, but only on condition of his obeying her blindly in all that concerned the King.

This little domestic tempest being lulled, Catherine came back to the Louvre. It was more than a year since she had left it, and she now held council with her nearest friends as to how she was to deal with the young King, whom Cypierre had complimented on his firmness.

"What is to be done?" said she to the two Gondis, Ruggieri, Birague, and Chiverni, now tutor and Chancellor to the Duc d'Anjou.

"First of all," said Birague, "get rid of Cypierre; he is not a courtier, he will never fall in with your views, and will think he is doing his duty by opposing you."

"Whom can I trust?" cried the Queen.

"One of us," said Birague.

"By my faith," said Gondi, "I promise to make the King as pliant as the King of Navarre."

"You let the late King die to save your other children; well, then, do as the grand Signors of Constantinople do: crush this one's passions and fancies," said Albert de Gondi. "He likes the arts, poetry, hunting, and a little girl he saw at Orleans; all this is quite enough to occupy him."

"Then you would be the King's tutor?" said Catherine, to the more capable of the two Gondis.

"If you will give me the necessary authority; it might be well to make me a Marshal of France and a Duke. Cypierre is too small a man to continue in that office. Henceforth the tutor of a King of France should be a Marshal and Duke, or something of the kind——"

"He is right," said Birague.

"Poetry and hunting," said Catherine, in a dreamy voice.

"We will hunt and make love!" cried Gondi.

"Besides," said Chiverni, "you are sure of Amyot, who will always be afraid of a drugged cup in case of disobedience, and with Gondi you will have the King in leading strings."

"You were resigned to the loss of one son to save the three others and the Crown; now you must have the courage to keep this one *occupied* to save the kingdom—to save yourself perhaps," said Ruggieri.

"He has just offended me deeply," said Catherine.

"He does not know how much he owes you; and if he did, you would not be safe," Birague replied with grave emphasis.

"It is settled," said the Queen, on whom this reply had a startling effect; "you are to be the King's governor, Gondi. The King must make me a return in favor of one of my friends for the concession I have made for that cowardly Bishop. But the fool has lost the Cardinal's hat; so long as I live I will hinder the Pope from fitting it to his head! We should have been very strong with Cardinal de Tournon to support us. What a trio they would have made: he as High Almoner with l'Hôpital and de Thou! As to the citi-

zens of Paris, I mean to make my son coax them over, and we will lean on them."

And Gondi was, in fact, made a Marshal, created Duc de Retz and tutor to the King, within a few days.

This little council was just over when Cardinal de Tournon came to announce to the Queen the messengers from Calvin. Admiral Coligny escorted them to secure them respectful treatment at the Louvre. The Queen summoned her battalion of maids of honor, and went into the great reception-room built by her husband, which no longer exists in the Louvre of our day.

At that time the staircase of the Louvre was in the clock-tower. Catherine's rooms were in the older part of the building, part of which survives in the Cour du Musée. The present staircase to the galleries was built where the *Salle des ballets* was before it. A *ballet* at that time meant a sort of dramatic entertainment performed by all the Court.

Revolutionary prejudice led to the most ridiculous mistake as to Charles IX. *à propos* to the Louvre. During the Revolution a belief defamatory of this King, whose character has been caricatured, made a monster of him. Chénier's tragedy was written under the provocation of a tablet hung up on the window of the part of the palace that projects towards the Quay. On it were these words, "From this window Charles IX. of execrable memory fired on the citizens of Paris." It may be well to point out to future historians and studious persons that the whole of that side of the Louvre, now called the Old Louvre—the projecting wing at a right angle to the Quay, connected the galleries with the Louvre by what is called the Galerie d'Apollon, and the Louvre with the Tuileries by the picture gallery—was not in existence in the time of Charles IX. The principal part of the site of the river-front, where lies the garden known as le Jardin de l'Infante, was occupied by the Hôtel de Bourbon, which belonged, in fact, to the House of Navarre. It would have been physically impossible for Charles IX. to fire from the *Louvre de Henri II.* on a boat full of Huguenots crossing the Seine, though

he could see the river from some windows, which are now built up, in that part of the palace.

Even if historians and libraries did not possess maps in which the Louvre at the time of Charles IX. is perfectly shown, the building bears in itself the refutation of the error. The several Kings who have contributed to this vast structure have never failed to leave their cipher on the work in some form of monogram. The venerable buildings, now all discolored, of that part of the Louvre that goes down to the Quay bear the initials of Henri II. and of Henri IV.; quite different from those of Henri III., who added to his H Catherine's double C in a way that looks like D to superficial observers. It was Henri IV. who was able to add his own palace, the Hôtel de Bourbon, with its gardens and domain, on to the Louvre. He first thought of uniting Catherine de' Medici's palace to the Louvre by finishing the galleries, of which the exquisite sculpture is too little appreciated.

But if no plan of Paris under Charles IX. were in existence, nor the monograms of the two Henrys, the difference in the architecture would be enough to give the lie to this calumny. The rusticated bosses of the Hôtel de la Force, and of this portion of the Louvre, are precisely characteristic of the transition from the architecture of the Renaissance to the architecture of Henri III., Henri IV., and Louis XIII.

This archæological digression, in harmony, to be sure, with the pictures at the beginning of this narrative, enables us to see the aspect of this other part of Paris, of which nothing now remains but that portion of the Louvre, where the beautiful bas-reliefs are perishing day by day.

When the Court was informed that the Queen was about to give audience to Théodore de Bèze and Chaudieu, introduced by Admiral Coligny, every one who had a right to go into the throne room hastened to be present at this interview. It was about six o'clock; Admiral Coligny had supped, and was picking his teeth as he walked upstairs between the two Calvinists. This playing with a toothpick was a confirmed habit with the Admiral; he involuntarily picked his teeth

in the middle of a battle when meditating a retreat. "Never trust the Admiral's toothpick, the Constable's 'No,' or Catherine's 'Yes,' "—was one of the proverbs of the Court at the time. And after the massacre of Saint-Bartholomew, the mob made horrible mockery of the Admiral's body, which hung for three days at Montfaucon, by sticking a grotesque toothpick between his teeth. Chroniclers have recorded this hideous jest. And, indeed, this trivial detail in the midst of a tremendous catastrophe is just like the Paris mob, which thoroughly deserves this grotesque parody of a line of Boileau's:

Le Français, né malin, créa la guillotine.

(The Frenchman, a born wag, invented the guillotine.)

In all ages, the Parisians have made fun before, during, and after the most terrible revolutions.

Théodore de Bèze was in Court dress, black silk long hose, slashed shoes, full trunks, a doublet of black silk, also slashed, and a little black velvet cloak, over which fell a fine white ruff, deeply gauffered. He wore the tuft of beard called a *virgule* (a comma) and a moustache. His sword hung by his side, and he carried a cane. All who know the pictures at Versailles, or the portraits by Odieuvre, know his round and almost jovial face, with bright eyes, and the remarkably high and broad forehead, which is characteristic of the poets and writers of that time. De Bèze had a pleasant face, which did him good service. He formed a striking contrast to Coligny, whose austere features are known to all, and to the bitter and bilious-looking Chaudieu, who wore the preacher's gown and Calvinist bands.

The state of affairs in the Chamber of Deputies in our own day, and that, no doubt, in the Convention too, may enable us to understand how at that Court and at that time persons, who six months after would be fighting to the death and waging heinous warfare, would meanwhile meet, address each other with courtesy, and exchange jests.

When Coligny entered the room, Birague, who would coldly advise the massacre of Saint-Bartholomew, and the Cardinal de Lorraine, who would tell his servant Besme not to miss the Admiral, came forward to meet him, and the Piedmontese said, with a smile:

"Well, my dear Admiral, so you have undertaken to introduce these gentlemen from Geneva?"

"And you will count it to me for a crime, perhaps," replied the Admiral in jest, "while, if you had undertaken it, you would have scored it as a merit."

"Master Calvin, I hear, is very ill," said the Cardinal de Lorraine to Théodore de Bèze. "I hope we shall not be suspected of having stirred his broth for him!"

"Nay, monseigneur, you would lose too much by that," said Théodore de Bèze shrewdly.

The Duc de Guise, who was examining Chaudieu, stared at his brother and Birague, who were both startled by this speech.

"By God!" exclaimed the Cardinal, "heretics are of the right faith in keen politics!"

To avoid difficulties, the Queen, who was announced at this moment, remained standing. She began by conversing with the Connétable, who spoke eagerly of the scandal of her admitting Calvin's envoys to her presence.

"But, you see, my dear Constable, we receive them without ceremony."

"Madame," said the Admiral, approaching Catherine, "these are the two doctors of the new religion who have come to an understanding with Calvin, and have taken his instructions as to a meeting where the various Churches of France may compromise their differences."

"This is Monsieur Théodore de Bèze, my wife's very great favorite," said the King of Navarre, coming forward and taking de Bèze by the hand.

"And here is Chaudieu!" cried the Prince de Condé. "My friend the Duc de Guise knows the captain," he added, look-

ing at la Balafré; "perhaps he would like to make acquaintance with the minister."

This sally made everybody laugh, even Catherine.

"By my troth," said the Duc de Guise, "I am delighted to see a man who can so well choose a follower, and make use of him in his degree. One of your men," said he to the preacher, "endured, without dying or confessing anything, the extreme of torture; I fancy myself brave, but I do not know that I could endure so well!"

"Hm!" observed Ambroise Paré, "you said not a word when I pulled the spear out of your face at Calais."

Catherine, in the middle of the semicircle formed right and left of the maids of honor and Court officials, kept silence. While looking at the two famous Reformers, she was trying to penetrate them with her fine, intelligent, black eyes, and study them thoroughly.

"One might be the sheath and the other the blade," Albert de Gondi said in her ear.

"Well, gentlemen," said Catherine, who could not help smiling, "has your master given you liberty to arrange a public conference where you may convert to the Word of God those modern Fathers of the Church who are the glory of our realm?"

"We have no master but the Lord," said Chaudieu.

"Well, you acknowledge some authority in the King of France?" said Catherine, smiling, and interrupting the minister.

"And a great deal in the Queen," added de Bèze, bowing low.

"You will see," she went on, "that the heretics will be my most dutiful subjects."

"Oh, madame!" cried Coligny, "what a splendid kingdom we will make for you! Europe reaps great profit from our divisions. It has seen one-half of France set against the other for fifty years past."

"Have we come here to hear chants in praise of heretics?" said the Connétable roughly.

"No, but to bring them to amendment," answered the Cardinal de Lorraine in a whisper, "and we hope to achieve it by a little gentleness."

"Do you know what I should have done in the reign of the King's father?" said Anne de Montmorency. "I should have sent for the Provost to hang those two rascals high and dry on the Louvre gallows."

"Well, gentlemen, and who are the learned doctors you will bring into the field?" said the Queen, silencing the Constable with a look.

"Duplessis-Mornay and Théodore de Bèze are our leaders," said Chaudieu.

"The Court will probably go to the château of Saint-Germain; and as it would not be seemly that this colloquy should take place in the same town, it shall be held in the little town of Poissy," replied Catherine.

"Shall we be safe there, madame?" asked Chaudieu.

"Oh!" said the Queen, with a sort of simplicity, "you will, no doubt, know what precautions to take. Monsieur the Admiral will make arrangements to that effect with my cousins de Guise and Montmorency."

"Fie on it all!" said the Constable; "I will have no part in it."

The Queen took Chaudieu a little way apart.

"What do you do to your sectarians to give them such a spirit?" said she. "My furrier's son was really sublime."

"We have faith," said Chaudieu.

At this moment the room was filled with eager groups, all discussing the question of this assembly, which, from the Queen's suggestion, was already spoken of as the "Convocation of Poissy." Catherine looked at Chaudieu, and felt it safe to say:

"Yes, a new faith."

"Ah, madame, if you were not blinded by your connection with the Court of Rome, you would see that we are returning to the true doctrine of Jesus Christ, who, while sanctifying the equality of souls, has given all men on earth equal rights."

"And do you think yourself the equal of Calvin?" said Catherine shrewdly. "Nay, nay, we are equals only in church. What, really? Break all bonds between the people and the throne?" cried Catherine. "You are not merely heretics; you rebel against obedience to the King while avoiding all obedience to the Pope."

She sharply turned away, and returned to Théodore de Bèze.

"I trust to you, monsieur," she said, "to carry through this conference conscientiously. Take time over it."

"I fancied," said Chaudieu to the Prince de Condé, the King of Navarre, and Admiral Coligny, "that affairs of State were taken more seriously."

"Oh, we all know exactly what we mean," said the Prince de Condé, with a significant glance at Théodore de Bèze.

The hunchback took leave of his followers to keep an assignation. This great Prince and party leader was one of the most successful gallants of the Court; the two handsomest women of the day fought for him with such infatuation, that the Maréchale de Saint-André, the wife of one of the coming Triumvirate, gave him her fine estate at Saint-Valery to win him from the Duchesse de Guise, the wife of the man who had wanted to bring his head under the axe; being unable to wean the Duc de Nemours from his flirtations with Mademoiselle de Rohan, she fell in love, meanwhile, with the leader of the Reformed party.

"How different from Geneva!" said Chaudieu to Théodore de Bèze on the little bridge by the Louvre.

"They are livelier here, and I cannot imagine why they are such traitors," replied de Bèze.

"Meet a traitor with a traitor-and-a-half," said Chaudieu in a whisper. "I have saints in Paris that I can rely on, and I mean to make a prophet of Calvin. Christophe will rid us of the most dangerous of our enemies."

"The Queen-mother, for whom the poor wretch endured torture, has already had him passed, by high-handed orders, as pleader before the Parlement, and lawyers are more apt to

be tell-tales than assassins. Remember Avenelles, who sold the secret of our first attempt to take up arms."

"But I know Christophe," said Chaudieu, with an air of conviction, as he and the Calvinist parted.

Some days after the reception of Calvin's secret envoys by Catherine, and towards the end of that year—for the year then began at Easter, and the modern calendar was not adopted till this very reign—Christophe, still stretched on an armchair, was sitting on that side of the large sombre room where our story began, in such a position as to look out on the river. His feet rested on a stool. Mademoiselle Lecamus and Babette Lallier had just renewed the application of compresses, soaked in a lotion brought by Ambroise, to whose care Catherine had commended Christophe. When once he was restored to his family, the lad had become the object of the most devoted care. Babette, with her father's permission, came to the house every morning, and did not leave till the evening. Christophe, a subject of wonder to the apprentices, gave rise in the neighborhood to endless tales, which involved him in poetic mystery. He had been put to torture, and the famous Ambroise Paré was exerting all his skill to save him. What, then, had he done to be treated so? On this point neither Christophe nor his father breathed a word. Catherine, now all-powerful, had an interest in keeping silence, and so had the Prince de Condé. The visits of Ambroise Paré, the surgeon to the King and to the House of Guise, permitted by the Queen-mother and the Princes of Lorraine to attend a youth accused of heresy, added to the singularity of this business, which no one could see through. And then the priest of Saint-Pierre aux Bœufs came several times to see his churchwarden's son, and these visits made the causes of Christophe's condition even more inexplicable.

The old furrier, who had a plan of his own, replied evasively when his fellows of the guild, traders, and friends spoke of his son:—

"I am very happy, neighbor, to have been able to save him! You know! it is well not to put your finger between the wood and the bark. My son put his hand to the stake and took out fire enough to burn my house down!—They imposed on his youth, and we citizens never get anything but scorn and harm by hanging on to the great. This quite determines me to make a lawyer of my boy; the law courts will teach him to weigh his words and deeds. The young Queen, who is now in Scotland, had a great deal to do with it; but perhaps Christophe was very imprudent too. I went through terrible grief.—All this will probably lead to my retiring from business; I will never go to Court any more. My son has had enough of the Reformation now; it has left him with broken arms and legs. But for Ambroise, where should I be?"

Thanks to these speeches and to his prudence, a report was spread in the neighborhood that Christophe no longer followed the creed of Colas. Every one thought it quite natural that the old Syndic should wish to see his son a lawyer in the Parlement, and thus the priest's calls seemed quite a matter of course. In thinking of the old man's woes, no one thought of his ambition, which would have been deemed monstrous.

The young lawyer, who had spent ninety days on the bed put up for him in the old sitting-room, had only been out of it for a week past, and still needed the help of crutches to enable him to walk. Babette's affection and his mother's tenderness had touched Christophe deeply; still, having him in bed, the two women lectured him soundly on the subject of religion. Président de Thou came to see his godson, and was most paternal. Christophe, as a pleader in the Parlement, ought to be a Catholic, he would be pledged to it by his oath; and the President, who never seemed to doubt the young man's orthodoxy, added these important words:

"You have been cruelly tested, my boy. I myself know nothing of the reasons Messieurs de Guise had for treating you thus; but now I exhort you to live quietly henceforth, and not to interfere in broils, for the favor of the King and

Queen will not be shown to such as brew storms. You are not a great enough man to drive a bargain with the King, like the Duke and the Cardinal. If you want to be councillor in the Parlement some day, you can only attain that high office by serious devotion to the cause of Royalty."

However, neither Monsieur de Thou's visit, nor Babette's charms, nor the entreaties of Mademoiselle Lecamus his mother, had shaken the faith of the Protestant martyr. Christophe clung all the more stoutly to his religion in proportion to what he had suffered for it.

"My father will never allow me to marry a heretic," said Babette in his ear.

Christophe replied only with tears, which left the pretty girl speechless and thoughtful.

Old Lecamus maintained his dignity as a father and a Syndic, watched his son, and said little. The old man, having got back his dear Christophe, was almost vexed with himself, and repentant of having displayed all his affection for his only son; but secretly he admired him. At no time in his life had the furrier pulled so many wires to gain his ends; for he could see the ripe harvest of the crop sown with so much toil, and wished to gather it all.

A few days since he had had a long conversation with Christophe alone, hoping to discover the secret of his son's tenacity. Christophe, who was not devoid of ambition, believed in the Prince de Condé. The Prince's generous speech —which was no more than the stock-in-trade of princes— was stamped on his heart. He did not know that Condé had wished him at the devil at the moment when he bid him such a touching farewell through the bars of his prison at Orleans.

"A Gascon would have understood," the Prince had said to himself.

And in spite of his admiration for the Prince, Christophe cherished the deepest respect for Catherine, the great Queen who had explained to him in a look that she was compelled by necessity to sacrifice him, and then, during his torture, had conveyed to him in another glance an unlimited promise by an almost imperceptible tear.

During the deep calm of the ninety days and nights he had spent in recovering, the newly-made lawyer thought over the events at Blois and at Orleans. He weighed, in spite of himself, it may be said, the influence of these two patrons; he hesitated between the Queen and the Prince. He had certainly done more for Catherine than for the Reformation; and the young man's heart and mind, of course, went forth to the Queen, less by reason of this difference than because she was a woman. In such a case a man will always found his hopes on a woman rather than on a man.

"I immolated myself for her—what will she not do for me?"

This was the question he almost involuntarily asked himself as he recalled the tone in which she had said, "My poor boy!"

It is difficult to conceive of the pitch of self-consciousness reached by a man alone and sick in bed. Everything, even the care of which he is the object, tends to make him think of himself alone. By exaggerating the Prince de Condé's obligations to him, Christophe looked forward to obtaining some post at the Court of Navarre. The lad, a novice still in politics, was all the more forgetful of the anxieties which absorb party leaders, and of the swift rush of men and events which overrule them, because he lived almost in solitary imprisonment in that dark parlor. Every party is bound to be ungrateful when it is fighting for dear life; and when it has won the day, there are so many persons to be rewarded, that it is ungrateful still. The rank and file submit to this oblivion, but the captains turn against the new master who for so long has marched as their equal.

Christophe, the only person to remember what he had suffered, already reckoned himself as one of the chiefs of the Reformation by considering himself as one of its martyrs. Lecamus, the old wolf of trade, acute and clear-sighted, had guessed his son's secret thoughts; indeed, all his manœuvring was based on the very natural hesitancy that possessed the lad.

"Would not it be fine," he had said the day before to

Babette, "to be the wife of a Councillor to the Parlement; you would be addressed as madame."

"You are crazy, neighbor," said Lallier. "In the first place, where would you find ten thousand crowns a year in landed estate, which a Councillor must show, and from whom could you purchase a connection? The Queen-mother and Regent would have to give all her mind to it to get your son into the Parlement; and he smells of the stake too strongly to be admitted."

"What would you give, now, to see your daughter a Councillor's wife?"

"You want to sound the depth of my purse, you old fox!" exclaimed Lallier.

Councillor to the Parlement! The words distracted Christophe's brain.

Long after the conference was over, one morning when Christophe sat gazing at the river, which reminded him of the scene that was the beginning of all this story, of the Prince de Condé, la Renaudie, and Chaudieu, of his journey to Blois, and of all he hoped for, the Syndic came to sit down by his son with ill-disguised glee under an affectation of solemnity.

"My boy," said he, "after what took place between you and the heads of the riot at Amboise, they owed you so much that your future might very well be cared for by the House of Navarre."

"Yes," replied Christophe.

"Well," his father went on, "I have definitely applied for permission for you to purchase a legal business in Béarn. Our good friend Paré undertook to transmit the letters I wrote in your name to the Prince de Condé and Queen Jeanne.—Here, read this reply from Monsieur de Pibrac, Vice-Chancellor of Navarre:—

"To Master Lecamus, Syndic of the Guild of Furriers.

"His Highness the Prince de Condé bids me express to you his regret at being unable to do anything for his fellow-

prisoner in the Tour de Saint-Aignan, whom he remembers well, and to whom, for the present, he offers the place of man-at-arms in his own company, where he will have the opportunity of making his way as a man of good heart—which he is.

"The Queen of Navarre hopes for an occasion of rewarding Master Christophe, and will not fail.

"And with this, Monsieur le Syndic, I pray God have you in His keeping. PIBRAC,

"Chancellor of Navarre.

"Nérac."

"Nérac! Pibrac! Crac!" cried Babette. "There is nothing to be got out of these Gascons; they think only of themselves."

Old Lecamus was looking at his son with ironical amusement.

"And he wants to set a poor boy on horseback whose knees and ankles were pounded up for him!" cried the mother. "What a shameful mockery!"

"I do not seem to see you as a Councillor in Navarre," said the old furrier.

"I should like to know what Queen Catherine would do for me if I petitioned her," said Christophe, much crestfallen.

"She made no promises," said the old merchant, "but I am sure she would not make a fool of you, and would remember your sufferings. Still, how could she make a councillor-at-law of a Protestant citizen?"

"But Christophe has never abjured!" exclaimed Babette. "He may surely keep his own secret as to his religious opinions."

"The Prince de Condé would be less scornful of a Councillor to the Parlement of Paris," said Lecamus.

"A Councillor, father! Is it possible?"

"Yes, if you do nothing to upset what I am managing for you. My neighbor Lallier here is ready to pay two hundred

thousand livres, if I add as much again, for the purchase of a fine estate entailed on the heirs male, which we will hand over to you."

"And I will add something more for a house in Paris," said Lallier.

"Well, Christophe?" said Babette.

"You are talking without the Queen," replied the young lawyer.

Some days after this bitter mortification, an apprentice brought this brief note to Christophe:

"Chaudieu wishes to see his son."

"Bring him in," said Christophe.

"O my saint and martyr!" cried the preacher, embracing the young man, "have you got over your sufferings?"

"Yes, thanks to Paré."

"Thanks to God, who gave you strength to endure them! But what is this I hear? You have passed as a pleader, you have taken the oath of fidelity, you have confessed the Whore, the Catholic, Apostolic, Romish Church."

"My father insisted."

"But are we not to leave father and mother and children and wife for the sacred cause of Calvinism, and to suffer all things?—Oh, Christophe, Calvin, the great Calvin, the whole party, the whole world, the future counts on your courage and your greatness of soul! We want your life."

There is this strange feature in the mind of man: the most devoted, even in the act of devoting himself, always builds up a romance of hope even in the most perilous crisis. Thus, when on the river under the Pont au Change, the prince, the soldier, and the preacher had required Christophe to carry to Queen Catherine the document which, if discovered, would have cost him his life, the boy had trusted to his wit, to chance, to his perspicacity, and had boldly marched on between the two formidable parties—the Guises and the Queen—who had so nearly crushed him. While in the torture-chamber he still had said to himself, "I shall live through it—it is only pain!".

But at this brutal command, "Die!" to a man who was still helpless, hardly recovered from the injuries he had suffered, and who clung all the more to life for having seen death so near, it was impossible to indulge in any such illusions.

Christophe calmly asked, "What do you want of me?"

"To fire a pistol bravely, as Stuart fired at Minard."

"At whom?"

"The Duc de Guise."

"Assassination?"

"Revenge!—Have you forgotten the hundred gentlemen massacre on one scaffold! A child, little d'Aubigné, said as he saw the butchery, 'They have beheaded all France.'"

"We are to take blows and not to return them, is the teaching of the Gospel," replied Christophe. "If we are to imitate the Catholics, of what use is it to reform the Church?"

"Oh, Christophe, they have made a lawyer of you, and you argue!" said Chaudieu.

"No, my friend," the youth replied. "But principles are ungrateful, and you and yours will only be the playthings of the House of Bourbon."

"Oh, Christophe, if you had only heard Calvin, you would know that we can turn them like a glove! The Bourbons are the glove, and we the hand."

"Read this," said Christophe, handing Pibrac's letter to the minister.

"Alas, boy! you are ambitious; you can no longer sacrifice yourself;" and Chaudieu went away.

Not long after this visit, Christophe, with the families of Lallier and Lecamus, had met to celebrate the plighting of Babette and Christophe in the old parlor, whence Christophe's couch was now removed, for he could climb the stairs now, and was beginning to drag himself about without crutches. It was nine in the evening, and they waited for Ambroise Paré. The family notary was sitting at a table covered with papers. The furrier was selling his house and

business to his head-clerk, who was to pay forty thousand livres down for the house, and to mortgage it as security for the stock-in-trade, besides paying twenty thousand livres on account.

Lecamus had purchased for his son a magnificent house in the Rue de Saint-Pierre aux Bœufs, built of stone by Philibert de l'Orme, as a wedding gift. The Syndic had also spent two hundred and fifty thousand livres out of his fortune, Lallier paying an equal sum, for the acquisition of a fine manor and estate in Picardy, for which five hundred thousand livres were asked. This estate being a dependence of the Crown, letters patent from the King—called letters of rescript—were necessary, besides the payment of considerable fines and fees. Thus the actual marriage was to be postponed till the royal signature could be obtained.

Though the citizens of Paris had obtained the right of purchasing manors and lands, the prudence of the Privy Council had placed certain restrictions on the transfer of lands belonging to the Crown; and the estate on which Lecamus had had his eye for the last ten years was one of these. Ambroise had undertaken to produce the necessary permission this very evening. Old Lecamus went to and fro between the sitting-room and the front door with an impatience that showed the eagerness of his ambition.

At last Ambroise appeared.

"My good friend!" exclaimed the surgeon in a great fuss, and looking at the supper-table, "what is your napery like? —Very good.—Now bring waxlights, and make haste, make haste. Bring out the best of everything you have."

"What is the matter?" asked the priest of Saint-Pierre aux Bœufs.

"The Queen-mother and the King are coming to sup with you," replied the surgeon. "The Queen and King expect to meet here an old Councillor, whose business is to be sold to Christophe, and Monsieur de Thou, who has managed the bargain. Do not look as if you expected them; I stole out of the Louvre."

In an instant all were astir. Christophe's mother and Babette's aunt trotted about in all the flurry of housewives taken by surprise. In spite of the confusion into which the announcement had thrown the party, preparations were made with miraculous energy. Christophe, amazed, astounded, overpowered by such condescension, stood speechless, looking on at all the bustle.

"The Queen and the King here!" said the old mother.

"The Queen?" echoed Babette; "but what for, what to do?"

Within an hour everything was altered; the old room was smartened up, the table shone. A sound of horses was heard in the street. The gleam of torches carried by the mounted escort brought all the neighbors' noses to the windows. The rush was soon over; no one was left under the arcade but the Queen-mother and her son, King Charles IX., Charles de Gondi, Master of the Wardrobe, and tutor to the King; Monsieur de Thou, the retiring Councillor; Pinard, Secretary of State, and two pages.

"Good folks," said the Queen as she went in, "the King, my son, and I have come to sign the marriage contract of your furrier's son, but on condition that he remains a Catholic. Only a Catholic can serve in the Parlement, only a Catholic can own lands dependent on the Crown, only a Catholic can sit at table with the King—what do you say, Pinard?"

The Secretary of State stepped forward, holding the letters patent.

"If we are not all Catholics here," said the little King, "Pinard will throw all the papers into the fire; but we are all Catholics?" he added, looking round proudly enough at the company.

"Yes, Sire," said Christophe Lecamus, bending the knee, not without difficulty, and kissing the hand the young King held out to him.

Queen Catherine, who also held out her hand to Christophe, pulled him up rather roughly, and leading him into a corner, said:

"Understand, boy, no subterfuges! We are playing an honest game?"

"Yes, madame," he said, dazzled by this splendid reward and by the honor the grateful Queen had done him.

"Well, then, Master Lecamus, the King, my son, and I permit you to purchase the offices and appointments of this good man Groslay, Councillor to the Parlement, who is here," said the Queen. "I hope, young man, that you will follow in the footsteps of your Lord President."

De Thou came forward and said:

"I will answer for him, madame."

"Very well, then proceed, notary," said Pinard.

"Since the King, our master, does us the honor of signing my daughter's marriage-contract," cried Lallier, "I will pay the whole price of the estate."

"The ladies may be seated," said the young King graciously. "As a wedding gift to the bride, with my mother's permission, I remit my fines and fees."

Old Lecamus and Lallier fell on their knees and kissed the boy-King's hand.

"By Heaven, Sire, what loads of money these citizens have!" said Gondi in his ear.

And the young King laughed.

"Their Majesties being so graciously inclined," said old Lecamus, "will they allow me to present to them my successor in the business, and grant him the royal patent as furrier to their Majesties?"

"Let us see him," said the King, and Lecamus brought forward his successor, who was white with alarm.

Old Lecamus was shrewd enough to offer the young King a silver cup which he had bought from Benvenuto Cellini when he was staying in Paris at the Tour de Nesle, at a cost of not less than two thousand crowns.

"Oh, mother! what a fine piece of work!" cried the youth, lifting the cup by its foot.

"It is Florentine," said Catherine.

"Pardon me, madame," said Lecamus; "it was made in

France, though by a Florentine. If it had come from Florence, it should have been the Queen's; but being made in France, it is the King's."

"I accept it, my friend," cried Charles IX., "and henceforth I drink out of it."

"It is good enough," the Queen remarked, "to be included among the Crown treasure."

"And you, Master Ambroise," she went on in an undertone, turning to the surgeon, and pointing to Christophe, "have you cured him? Will he walk?"

"He will fly," said the surgeon, with a smile. "You have stolen him from us very cleverly!"

"The abbey will not starve for lack of one monk!" replied the Queen, in the frivolous tone for which she has been blamed, but which lay only on the surface.

The supper was cheerful; the Queen thought Babette pretty, and, like the great lady she was, she slipped a diamond ring on the girl's finger in compensation for the value of the silver cup.

King Charles IX., who afterwards was perhaps rather too fond of thus invading his subjects' homes, supped with a good appetite; then, on a word from his new tutor, who had been instructed, it is said, to efface the virtuous teaching of Cypierre, he incited the President of Parlement, the old retired councillor, the Secretary of State, the priest, the notary, and the citizens to drink so deep, that Queen Catherine rose to go at the moment when she saw that their high spirits were becoming uproarious.

As the Queen rose, Christophe, his father, and the two women took up tapers to light her as far as the door of the shop. Then Christophe made so bold as to pull the Queen's wide sleeve and give her a meaning look. Catherine stopped, dismissed the old man and the women with a wave of her hand, and said to the young man—"What?"

"If you can make any use of the information, madame," said he, speaking close to the Queen's ear, "I can tell you that assassins are plotting against the Duc de Guise's life."

"You are a loyal subject," said Catherine with a smile, "and I will never forget you."

She held out her hand, famous for its beauty, drawing off her glove as a mark of special favor. And Christophe, as he kissed that exquisite hand, was more Royalist than ever.

"Then I shall be rid of that wretch without my having anything to do with it," was her reflection as she put on her glove.

She mounted her mule and returned to the Louvre with her two pages.

Christophe drank, but he was gloomy; Paré's austere face reproached him for his apostasy; however, later events justified the old Syndic. Christophe would certainly never have escaped in the massacre of Saint-Bartholomew; his wealth and lands would have attracted the butchers. History has recorded the cruel fate of the wife of Lallier's successor, a beautiful woman, whose naked body remained hanging by the hair for three days to one of the starlings of the Pont au Change. Babette could shudder then as she reflected that such a fate might have been hers if Christophe had remained a Calvinist, as the Reformers were soon generally called. Calvin's ambition was fulfilled, but not till after his death.

This was the origin of the famous Lecamus family of lawyers. Tallemant des Réaux was mistaken in saying they had come from Picardy. It was afterwards to the interest of the Lecamus family to refer their beginnings to the time when they had acquired their principal estate, situated in that province.

Christophe's son, and his successor under Louis XIII., was father of that rich President Lecamus, who in Louis XIV.'s time built the magnificent mansion which divided with the Hôtel Lambert the admiration of Parisians and foreigners, and which is certainly one of the finest buildings in Paris. This house still exists in the Rue de Thorigny, though it was pillaged at the beginning of the Revolution, as belonging to Monsieur de Juigné, Archbishop of Paris. All the paintings

were then defaced, and the lodgers who have since dwelt there have still further damaged it. This fine residence, earned in the old house in the Rue de la Pelleterie, still shows what splendid results were then the outcome of family spirit. We may be allowed to doubt whether modern individualism, resulting from the repeated equal division of property, will ever raise such edifices.

PART II

THE RUGGIERI'S SECRET

Between eleven o'clock and midnight, towards the end of October 1573, two Florentines, brothers, Albert de Gondi, Marshal of France, and Charles de Gondi la Tour, Master of the Wardrobe to King Charles IX., were sitting at the top of a house in the Rue Saint-Honoré on the edge of the gutter. Such gutters were made of stone; they ran along below the roof to catch the rain-water, and were pierced here and there with long gargoyles carved in the form of grotesque creatures with gaping jaws. In spite of the zeal of the present generation in the destruction of ancient houses, there were still in Paris many such gutter-spouts when, not long since, the police regulations as to waste-pipes led to their disappearance. A few sculptured gutters are still to be seen in the Saint-Antoine quarter, where the low rents have kept owners from adding rooms in the roof.

It may seem strange that two persons invested with such important functions should have chosen a perch more befitting cats. But to any one who has hunted through the historical curiosities of that time, and seen how many interests were complicated about the throne, so that the domestic politics of France can only be compared to a tangled skein of thread, these two Florentines are really cats, and quite in their place in the gutter. Their devotion to the person of Catherine de' Medici, who had transplanted them to the French Court, required them to shirk none of the consequences of their intrusion there.

But to explain how and why these two courtiers were perched up there, it will be necessary to relate a scene which

had just taken place within a stone's throw of this gutter, at the Louvre, in the fine brown room—which is, perhaps, all that remains of Henri II.'s apartments—where the Court was in attendance after supper on the two Queens and the King. At that time middle-class folk supped at six o'clock, and men of rank at seven; but people of exquisite fashion supped between eight and nine; it was the meal we nowadays call dinner.

Some people have supposed that etiquette was the invention of Louis XIV.; but this is a mistake; it was introduced into France by Catherine de' Medici, who was so exacting that the Connétable Anne de Montmorency had more difficulty in obtaining leave to ride into the courtyard of the Louvre than in winning his sword, and even then the permission was granted only on the score of his great age. Etiquette was slightly relaxed under the first three Bourbon Kings, but assumed an Oriental character under Louis the Great, for it was derived from the Lower Empire, which borrowed it from Persia. In 1573 not only had very few persons a right to enter the courtyard of the Louvre with their attendants and torches, just as in Louis XIV.'s time only dukes and peers might drive under the porch, but the functions which gave the privilege of attending their Majesties after supper could easily be counted. The Maréchal de Retz, whom we have just seen keeping watch on the gutter, once offered a thousand crowns of that day to the clerk of the closet to get speech of Henri III. at an hour when he had no right of *entrée*. And how a certain venerable historian mocks at a view of the courtyard of the château of Blois, into which the draughtsman introduced the figure of a man on horseback!

At this hour, then, there were at the Louvre none but the most eminent persons in the kingdom. Queen Elizabeth of Austria and her mother-in-law, Catherine de' Medici, were seated to the left of the fireplace. In the opposite corner the King, sunk in his armchair, affected an apathy excusable on the score of digestion, for he had eaten like a prince re-

turned from hunting. Possibly, too, he wished to avoid speech in the presence of so many persons whose interest it was to detect his thoughts.

The courtiers stood, hat in hand, at the further end of the room. Some conversed in undertones; others kept an eye on the King, hoping for a glance or a word. One, being addressed by the Queen-mother, conversed with her for a few minutes. Another would be so bold as to speak a word to Charles IX., who replied with a nod or a short answer. A German noble, the Count of Solern, was standing in the chimney corner by the side of Charles V.'s grand-daughter, with whom he had come to France. Near the young Queen, seated on a stool, was her lady-in-waiting, the Countess Fieschi, a Strozzi, and related to Catherine. The beautiful Madame de Sauves, a descendant of Jacques Cœur, and mistress in succession of the King of Navarre, of the King of Poland, and of the Duc d'Alençon, had been invited to supper, but she remained standing, her husband being merely a Secretary of State. Behind these two ladies were the two Gondis, talking to them. They alone were laughing of all the dull assembly. Gondi, made Duc de Retz and Gentleman of the Bedchamber, since obtaining the Marshal's bâton though he had never commanded an army, had been sent as the King's proxy to be married to the Queen at Spires. This honor plainly indicated that he, like his brother, was one of the few persons whom the King and Queen admitted to a certain familiarity.

On the King's side the most conspicuous figure was the Maréchal de Tavannes, who was at Court on business; Neufville de Villeroy, one of the shrewdest negotiators of the time, who laid the foundation of the fortunes of his family; Messieurs de Birague and de Chiverni, one in attendance on the Queen-mother, the other Chancellor of Anjou and of Poland, who, knowing Catherine's favoritism, had attached himself to Henry III., the brother whom Charles IX. regarded as an enemy; Strozzi, a cousin of Queen Catherine's, and a few more gentlemen, among whom were to be noted

the old Cardinal de Lorraine, and his nephew, the young Duc de Guise, both very much kept at a distance by Catherine and by the King. These two chiefs of the Holy Alliance, afterwards known as the League, established some years since with Spain, made a display of the submission of servants who await their opportunity to become the masters; Catherine and Charles IX. were watching each other with mutual attention.

At this Court—as gloomy as the room in which it had assembled—each one had reasons for sadness or absence of mind. The young Queen was enduring all the torments of jealousy, and disguised them ineffectually by attempting to smile at her husband, whom she adored as a pious woman of infinite kindness. Marie Touchet, Charles IX.'s only mistress, to whom he was chivalrously faithful, had come home a month since from the château of Fayet, in Dauphiné, whither she had retired for the birth of her child; and she had brought back with her the only son Charles IX. ever had —Charles, at first Comte d'Auvergne, and afterwards Duc d'Angoulême.

Besides the grief of seeing her rival the mother of the King's son, while she had only a daughter, the poor Queen was enduring the mortification of complete desertion. During his mistress' absence, the King had made it up with his wife with a vehemence which history mentions as one of the causes of his death. Thus Marie Touchet's return made the pious Austrian princess understand how little her husband's heart had been concerned in his love-making. Nor was this the only disappointment the young Queen had to endure in this matter; till now Catherine de' Medici had seemed to be her friend; but, in fact, her mother-in-law, for political ends, had encouraged her son's infidelity, and preferred to support the mistress rather than the wife. And this is the reason why.

When Charles IX. first confessed his passion for Marie Touchet, Catherine looked with favor on the girl for reasons affecting her own prospects of dominion. Marie

Touchet was brought to Court at a very early age, at the time of life when a girl's best feelings are in their bloom; she loved the King passionately for his own sake. Terrified at the gulf into which ambition had overthrown the Duchesse de Valentinois, better known as Diane de Poitiers, she was afraid too, no doubt, of Queen Catherine, and preferred happiness to splendor. She thought perhaps that a pair of lovers so young as she and the King were could not hold their own against the Queen-mother.

And, indeed, Marie, the only child of Jean Touchet, the lord of Beauvais and le Quillard, King's Councillor, and Lieutenant of the Bailiwick of Orleans, half-way between the citizen class and the lowest nobility, was neither altogether a noble nor altogether *bourgeoise,* and was probably ignorant of the objects of innate ambition aimed at by the Pisseleus and the Saint-Vallier, women of family who were struggling for their families with the secret weapons of love. Marie Touchet, alone, and of no rank, spared Catherine de' Medici the annoyance of finding in her son's mistress the daughter of some great house who might have set up for her rival.

Jean Touchet, a wit in his day, to whom some poets dedicated their works, wanted nothing of the Court. Marie, a young creature, with no following, as clever and well-informed as she was simple and artless, suited the Queen-mother to admiration, and won her warm affection.

In point of fact, Catherine persuaded the Parlement to acknowledge the son which Marie Touchet bore to the King in the month of April, and she granted him the title of Comte d'Auvergne, promising the King that she would leave the boy her personal estate, the *Comtés* of Auvergne and Lauraguais. Afterwards, Marguerite, Queen of Navarre, disputed the gift when she became Queen of France, and annulled it; but later still, Louis XIII., out of respect to the Royal blood of the Valois, indemnified the Comte d'Auvergne by making him Duc d'Angoulême.

Catherine had already given Marie Touchet, who asked for nothing, the manor of Belleville, an estate without a title,

near Vincennes, whither she came when, after hunting, the King slept at that Royal residence. Charles IX. spent the greater part of his later days in that gloomy fortress, and, according to some authors, ended his days there as Louis XII. had ended his. Though it was very natural that a lover so entirely captivated should lavish on the woman he adored fresh proofs of affection when he had to expiate his legitimate infidelities, Catherine, after driving her son back to his wife's arms, certainly pleaded for Marie Touchet as women can, and had won the King back to his mistress again. Whatever could keep Charles IX. employed in anything but politics was pleasing to Catherine; and the kind intentions she expressed towards this child for the moment deceived Charles IX., who was beginning to regard her as his enemy.

The motives on which Catherine acted in this business escaped the discernment of the Queen, who, according to Brantôme, was one of the gentlest Queens that ever reigned, and who did no harm nor displeasure to any one, even reading her Hours in secret. But this innocent Princess began to perceive what gulfs yawn round a throne, a terrible discovery which might well make her feel giddy; and some still worse feeling must have inspired her reply to one of her ladies, who, at the King's death, observed to her that if she had had a son, she would be Queen-mother and Regent:

"Ah, God be praised that He never gave me a son! What would have come of it? The poor child would have been robbed, as they tried to rob the King my husband, and I should have been the cause of it.—God has had mercy on the kingdom, and has ordered everything for the best."

This Princess, of whom Brantôme thinks he has given an ample description when he had said that she had a complexion of face as fine and delicate as that of the ladies of her Court, and very pleasing, and that she had a beautiful shape though but of middle height, was held of small account at the Court; and the King's state affording her an excuse for her double grief, her demeanor added to the gloomy hues of a picture to which a young Queen less cruelly

stricken than she was might have given some brightness. The pious Elizabeth was at this crisis a proof of the fact that qualities which add lustre to a woman in ordinary life may be fatal in a Queen. A Princess who did not devote her whole night to prayer would have been a valuable ally for Charles IX., who found no help either in his wife or in his mistress.

As to the Queen-mother, she was absorbed in watching the King; he during supper had made a display of high spirits, which she interpreted as assumed to cloak some plan against herself. Such sudden cheerfulness was in too strong a contrast to the fractious humor he had betrayed by his persistency in hunting, and by a frenzy of toil at his forge, where he wrought iron, for Catherine to be duped by it. Though she could not guess what statesman was lending himself to these schemes and plots—for Charles IX. could put his mother's spies off the scent—Catherine had no doubt that some plan against her was in the wind.

The unexpected appearance of Tavannes, arriving at the same time as Strozzi, whom she had summoned, had greatly aroused her suspicions. By her power of organization Catherine was superior to the evolution of circumstances; but against sudden violence she was powerless.

As many persons know nothing of the state of affairs, complicated by the multiplicity of parties which then racked France, each leader having his own interests in view, it is needful to devote a few words to describing the dangerous crisis in which the Queen-mother had become entangled. And as this will show Catherine de' Medici in a new light, it will carry us to the very core of this narrative.

Two words will fully summarize this strange woman, so interesting to study, whose influence left such deep traces on France. These two words are dominion and astrology Catherine de' Medici was excessively ambitious; she had no passion but for power. Superstitious and a fatalist, as many a man of superior mind has been, her only sincere belief was in the occult sciences. Without this twofold light, she must always remain misunderstood; and by giving the first place

to her faith in astrology, a light will be thrown on the two philosophical figures of this Study.

There was a man whom Catherine clung to more than to her children; this man was Cosmo Ruggieri. She gave him rooms in her Hôtel de Soissons; she had made him her chief counselor, instructing him to tell her if the stars ratified the advice and common-sense of her ordinary advisers.

Certain curious antecedent facts justified the power which Ruggieri exerted over his mistress till her latest breath. One of the most learned men of the sixteenth century was beyond doubt the physician to Catherine's father, Lorenzo de' Medici, Duke of Urbino. This leech was known as Ruggiero the elder (*vecchio Ruggier,* and in French *Roger l'Ancien,* with authors who have written concerning alchemy), to distinguish him from his two sons, Lorenzo Ruggiero, called the Great by writers on the Cabala, and Cosmo Ruggiero, Catherine's astrologer, also known as *Roger* by various French historians. French custom altered their name to Ruggieri, as it did Catherine's from Medici to Medicis.

The elder Ruggieri, then, was so highly esteemed by the family of the Medici that the two Dukes, Cosmo and Lorenzo, were godfathers to his sons. In his capacity of mathematician, astrologer, and physician to the Ducal House—three offices that were often scarcely distinguished—he cast the horoscope of Catherine's nativity, in concert with Bazile, the famous mathematician. At that period the occult sciences were cultivated with an eagerness which may seem surprising to the sceptical spirits of this supremely analytical age, who perhaps may find in this historical sketch the germ of the positive sciences which flourish in the nineteenth century—bereft, however, of the poetic grandeur brought to them by the daring speculators of the sixteenth; for they, instead of applying themselves to industry, exalted art and vivified thought. The protection universally granted to these sciences by the sovereigns of the period was indeed justified by the admirable works of inventors who, starting from the search for the *magnum opus,* arrived at astonishing results.

Never, in fact, were rulers more curious for these mysteries. The Fugger family, in whom every modern Lucullus must recognize his chiefs, and every banker his masters, were beyond a doubt men of business, not to be caught nodding; well, these practical men, while lending the capitalized wealth of Europe to the sovereigns of the sixteenth century—who ran into debt quite as handsomely as those of to-day—these illustrious entertainers of Charles V. furnished funds for the retorts of Paracelsus. At the beginning of the sixteenth century, Ruggieri the elder was the head of that secret college whence came Cardan, Nostradamus, and Agrippa, each in turn physician to the Valois; and all the astronomers, astrologers, and alchemists who at that period crowded to the Courts of the Princes of Christendom, and who found especial welcome and protection in France from Catherine de' Medici.

In the horoscope cast for Catherine by Bazile and Ruggieri the elder, the principal events of her life were predicted with an accuracy that is enough to drive disbelievers to despair. This forecast announced the disasters which, during the siege of Florence, affected her early life, her marriage with a Prince of France, his unexpected accession to the throne, the birth and the number of her children. Three of her sons were to reign in succession, her two daughters were to become queens; all were to die childless. And this was all so exactly verified, that many historians have regarded it as a prophecy after the event.

It is well known that Nostradamus brought to the château of Chaumont, whither Catherine went at the time of la Renaudie's conspiracy, a woman who had the gift of reading the future. Now in the time of Francis II., when the Queen's sons were still children and in good health, before Elizabeth de Valois had married Philip II. of Spain, or Marguerite de Valois had married Henri de Bourbon, King of Navarre, Nostradamus and this soothsayer confirmed all the details of the famous horoscope.

This woman, gifted no doubt with second-sight, and one of the extensive association of indefatigable inquirers for

the *magnum opus,* though her life has evaded the ken of history, foretold that the last of these children to wear the crown would perish assassinated. Having placed the Queen in front of a magical mirror in which a spinning-wheel was reflected, each child's face appearing at the end of a spoke, the soothsayer made the wheel turn, and the Queen counted the number of turns. Each turn was a year of a reign. When Henri IV. was placed on the wheel, it went round twenty-two times. The woman—some say it was a man—told the terrified Queen that Henri de Bourbon would certainly be King of France, and reign so many years. Queen Catherine vowed a mortal hatred of the Béarnais on hearing that he would succeed the last, murdered Valois.

Curious to know what sort of death she herself would die, she was warned to beware of Saint-Germain. Thenceforth, thinking that she would be imprisoned or violently killed at the château of Saint-Germain, she never set foot in it, though, by its nearness to Paris, it was infinitely better situated for her plans than those where she took refuge with the King in troubled times. When she fell ill, a few days after the Duc de Guise was assassinated, during the assembly of the States-General at Blois, she asked the name of the prelate who came to minister to her. She was told that his name was Saint-Germain.

"I am a dead woman!" she cried.

She died the next day, having lived just the number of years allotted to her by every reading of her horoscope.

This scene, known to the Cardinal de Lorraine, who ascribed it to the Black Art, was being realized: Francis II. had reigned for two turns only of the wheel, and Charles IX. was achieving his last. When Catherine spoke these strange words to her son Henri as he set out for Poland, "You will soon return!" they must be ascribed to her faith in the occult sciences, and not to any intention of poisoning Charles IX. Marguerite de France was now Queen of Navarre; Elizabeth was Queen of Spain; the Duc d'Anjou was King of Poland.

Many other circumstances contributed to confirm Catherine's belief in the occult sciences. On the eve of the tournament where Henri II. was mortally wounded, Catherine saw the fatal thrust in a dream. Her astrological council, consisting of Nostradamus and the two Ruggieri, had foretold the King's death. History has recorded Catherine's earnest entreaties that he should not enter the lists. The prognostic, and the dream begotten of the prognostic, were verified.

The chronicles of the time relate another and not less strange fact. The courier who brought news of the victory of Moncontour arrived at night, having ridden so hard that he had killed three horses. The Queen-mother was roused, and said, "I knew it."

"In fact," says Brantôme, "she had the day before announced her son's success and some details of the fight."

The astrologer attached to the House of Bourbon foretold that the youngest of the Princes in direct descent from Saint-Louis, the son of Antoine de Bourbon, would be King of France. This prophecy, noted by Sully, was fulfilled precisely as described by the horoscope, which made Henri IV remark that by dint of lies these astrologers hit on the truth.

Be this as it may, most of the clever men of the time believed in the far-reaching "science of the Magi," as it was called by the masters of astrology—or sorcery, as it was termed by the people—and they were justified by the verification of horoscopes.

It was for Cosmo Ruggieri, her mathematician and astrologer—her wizard, if you will—that Catherine erected the pillar against the corn-market in Paris, the only remaining relic of the Hôtel de Soissons. Cosmo Ruggieri, like confessors, had a mysterious influence which satisfied him, as it does them. His secret ambition, too, was superior to that of vulgar minds. This man, depicted by romance-writers and playwrights as a mere juggler, held the rich abbey of Saint-Mahé in Lower Brittany, and had refused high ecclesiastical preferment; the money he derived in abundance from the superstitious mania of the time was sufficient for his private

undertakings; and the Queen's hand, extended to protect his head, preserved every hair of it from harm.

As to Catherine's devouring thirst for dominion, her desire to acquire power was so great that, in order to grasp it, she could ally herself with the Guises, the enemies of the throne; and to keep the reins of State in her own hands, she adopted every means, sacrificing her friends, and even her children. This woman could not live without the intrigues of rule, as a gambler cannot live without the excitement of play. Though she was an Italian and a daughter of the luxurious Medici, the Calvinists, though they calumniated her plentifully, never accused her of having a lover.

Appreciating the maxim "Divide to reign," for twelve years she had been constantly playing off one force against another. As soon as she took the reins of government into her hands, she was compelled to encourage discord to neutralize the strength of two rival Houses and save the throne. This necessary system justified Henri II.'s foresight. Catherine was the inventor of the political see-saw, imitated since by every Prince who has found himself in a similar position; she upheld, by turns, the Calvinists against the Guises, and the Guises against the Calvinists. Then, after using the two creeds to check each other in the heart of the people, she set the Duc d'Anjou against Charles IX. After using things to counteract each other, she did the same with men, always keeping the clue to their interests in her own hands.

But in this tremendous game, which requires the head of a Louis XI. or a Louis XVIII., the player inevitably is the object of hatred to all parties, and is condemned to win unfailingly, for one lost battle makes every interest his enemy, until indeed by dint of winning he ends by finding no one to play against him. The greater part of Charles IX.'s reign was the triumph of the domestic policy carried out by this wonderful woman. What extraordinary skill Catherine must have brought into play to get the chief command of the army given to the Duc d'Anjou, under a brave young King thirsting for glory, capable and generous—and in the face of the

Connétable Anne de Montmorency! The Duc d'Anjou, in the eyes of all Europe, reaped the honors of Saint-Bartholomew's Day, while Charles IX. had all the odium. After instilling into the King's mind a spurious and covert jealousy of his brother, she worked upon this feeling so as to exhaust Charles IX.'s really fine qualities in the intrigues of rivalry with his brother. Cypierre, their first tutor, and Amyot, Charles IX.'s preceptor, had made their royal charge so noble a man, and had laid the foundations of so great a reign, that the mother hated the son from the very first day when she feared to lose her power after having conquered it with so much difficulty.

These facts have led certain historians to believe that the Queen-mother had a preference for Henri III.; but her behavior at this juncture proves that her heart was absolutely indifferent towards her children. The Duc d'Anjou, when he went to govern Poland, robbed her of the tool she needed to keep Charles IX.'s mind fully occupied by these domestic intrigues, which had hitherto neutralized his energy by giving food to his vehement feelings. Catherine then hatched the conspiracy of la Mole and Coconnas, in which the Duc d'Alençon had a hand; and he, when he became Duc d'Anjou on his brother's being made King, lent himself very readily to his mother's views, and displayed an ambition which was encouraged by his sister Marguerite, Queen of Navarre.

This plot, now ripened to the point which Catherine desired, aimed at putting the young Duke and his brother-in-law, the King of Navarre, at the head of the Calvinists, at seizing Charles IX., thus making the King, who had no heir, a prisoner, and leaving the throne free for the Duke, who proposed to establish Calvinism in France. Only a few days before his death, Calvin had won the reward he hoped for—the Reformed creed was called Calvinism in his honor.

La Mole and Coconnas had been arrested fifty days before the night on which this scene opens, to be beheaded in the following April; and if le Laboureur and other judicious writers had not amply proved that they were the victims of

the Queen-mother, Cosmo Ruggieri's participation in the affair would be enough to show that she secretly directed it. This man, suspected and hated by the King for reasons which will be presently sufficiently explained, was implicated by the inquiries. He admitted that he had furnished la Mole with an image representing the King and stabbed to the heart with two needles. This form of witchcraft was at that time a capital crime. This kind of bedevilment (called in French *envoûter,* from the Latin *vultus,* it is said) represented one of the most infernal conceptions that hatred could imagine, and the word admirably expresses the magnetic and terrible process carried on, in occult science, by constantly active malevolence on the person devoted to death; its effects being incessantly suggested by the sight of the wax figure. The law at that time considered, and with good reason, that the idea thus embodied constituted high treason. Charles IX. desired the death of the Florentine; Catherine, more powerful, obtained from the Supreme Court, through the intervention of her Councillor Lecamus, that her astrologer should be condemned only to the galleys. As soon as the King was dead, Ruggieri was pardoned by an edict of Henri III.'s, who reinstated him in his revenues and received him at Court.

Catherine had, by this time, struck so many blows on her son's heart, that at this moment he was only anxious to shake off the yoke she had laid on him. Since Marie Touchet's absence, Charles IX., having nothing to occupy him, had taken to observing very keenly all that went on around him. He had set very skilful snares for certain persons whom he had trusted, to test their fidelity. He had watched his mother's proceedings, and had kept her in ignorance of his own, making use of all the faults she had inculcated in order to deceive her. Eager to efface the feeling of horror produced in France by the massacre of Saint-Bartholomew, he took an active interest in public affairs, presided at the council, and tried by well-planned measures to seize the reins of government. Though the Queen might have attempted to counteract her son's en-

deavors by using all the influence that maternal authority and her habit of dominion could have over his mind, the downward course of distrust is so rapid that, at the first leap, the son had gone too far to be recalled.

On the day when his mother's words to the King of Poland were repeated to Charles IX., he already felt so ill that the most hideous notions dawned on his mind; and when such suspicions take possession of a son and a King, nothing can remove them. In fact, on his deathbed his mother was obliged to interrupt him, exclaiming, "Do not say that, monsieur!" when Charles IX., intrusting his wife and daughter to the care of Henri IV., was about to put him on his guard against Catherine.

Though Charles IX. never failed in the superficial respect of which she was so jealous, and she never called the Kings, her sons, anything but monsieur, the Queen-mother had, for some months past, detected in Charles' manner the ill-disguised irony of revenge held in suspense. But he must be a clever man who could deceive Catherine. She held in her hand this conspiracy of the Duc d'Alençon and la Mole, so as to be able to divert Charles' efforts at emancipation by his new rivalry of a brother; but before making use of it, she was anxious to dissipate the want of confidence which might make her reconciliation with the King impossible—for how could he leave the power in the hands of a mother who was capable of poisoning him?

Indeed, at this juncture she thought herself so far in danger that she had sent for Strozzi, her cousin, a soldier famous for his death. She held secret councils with Birague and the Gondis, and never had she so frequently consulted the oracle of the Hôtel de Soissons.

Though long habits of dissimulation and advancing years had given Catherine that Abbess-like countenance, haughty and ascetic, expressionless and yet deep, reserved but scrutinizing, and so remarkable for any student of her portraits, those about her perceived a cloud over this cold, Florentine mirror. No sovereign was ever a more imposing figure than

this woman had made herself since the day when she had succeeded in coercing the Guises after the death of Francis II. Her black velvet hood, with a peak over the forehead, for she never went out of mourning for Henri II., was, as it were, a womanly cowl round her cold, imperious features, to which she could, however, on occasion, give insinuating Italian charm. She was so well made, that she introduced the fashion for women to ride on horseback in such a way as to display their legs; this is enough to prove that hers were of perfect form. Every lady in Europe thenceforth rode on a side-saddle, *à la planchette,* for France had long set the fashions.

To any one who can picture this impressive figure, the scene in the great room that evening has an imposing aspect. The two Queens, so unlike in spirit, in beauty, and in dress, and almost at daggers drawn, were both much too absent-minded to give the impetus for which the courtiers waited to raise their spirits.

The dead secret of the drama which, for the past six months, the son and mother had been cautiously playing, was guessed by some of their followers; the Italians, more especially, had kept an attentive lookout, for if Catherine should lose the game, they would all be the victims. Under these circumstances, at a moment when Catherine and her son were vying with each other in subterfuges, the King was the centre of observation.

Charles IX., tired by a long day's hunting, and by the serious reflections he brooded over in secret, looked forty this evening. He had reached the last stage of the malady which killed him, and which gave rise to grave suspicions of poison. According to de Thou, the Tacitus of the Valois, the surgeon found unaccountable spots in the King's body (*ex causâ ignitâ reperti livores*). His funeral was even more carelessly conducted than that of Francis II. Charles the Ninth was escorted from Saint-Lazare to Saint-Denis by Brantôme and a few archers of the Guard commanded by the Comte de Solern. This circumstance, added to the mother's sup-

posed hatred of her son, may confirm the accusation brought against her by de Thou: at least it gives weight to the opinion here expressed, that she cared little for any of her children, an indifference which is accounted for by her faith in the pronouncement of astrology. Such a woman could not care for tools that were to break in her hands. Henri III. was the last King under whom she could hope to reign; and that was all.

In our day it seems allowable to suppose that Charles IX. died a natural death. His excesses, his manner of life, the sudden development of his powers, his last struggles to seize the reins of government, his desire to live, his waste of strength, his last sufferings and his last pleasures, all indicate, to impartial judges, that he died of disease of the lungs, a malady at that time little understood, and of which nothing was known; and its symptoms might lead Charles himself to believe that he was poisoned.

The real poison given him by his mother lay in the evil counsels of the courtiers with whom she surrounded him, who induced him to waste his intellectual and physical powers, and who thus were the cause of a disease which was purely incidental and not congenital.

Charles the Ninth, at this period of his life more than at any other, bore the stamp of a sombre dignity not unbecoming in a King. The majesty of his secret thoughts was reflected in his face, which was remarkable for the Italian complexion he inherited from his mother. This ivory pallor, so beautiful by artificial light, and so well suited with an expression of melancholy, gave added effect to his deep blue eyes showing narrowly under thick eyelids, and thus acquiring that keen acumen which imagination pictures in the glance of a King, while their color was an aid to dissimulation. Charles' eyes derived an awe-inspiring look from his high, marked eyebrows—accentuating a lofty forehead—which he could lift or lower with singular facility. His nose was long and broad, and thick at the tip—a true lion's nose; he had large ears; light reddish hair; lips of the color of blood, the lips of a con-

sumptive man; the upper lip thin and satirical, the lower full enough to indicate fine qualities of feeling.

The wrinkles stamped on his brow in early life, when terrible anxieties had blighted its freshness, made his face intensely interesting—more than one had been caused by remorse for the massacre of Saint-Bartholomew, a deed which had been craftily foisted on him; but there were two other lines on his face which would have been eloquent to any student who at that time could have had a special revelation of the principles of modern physiology. These lines made a deep furrow from the cheek-bones to each corner of the mouth, and betrayed the efforts made by an exhausted organization to respond to mental strain and to violent physical enjoyment. Charles IX. was worn out. The Queen-mother, seeing her work, must have felt some remorse, unless, indeed, politics stifle such a feeling in all who sit under the purple. If Catherine could have foreseen the effects of her intrigues on her son, she might perhaps have shrunk from them?

It was a terrible spectacle. The King, by nature so strong, had become weak; the spirit, so nobly tempered, was racked by doubts; this man, the centre of authority, felt himself helpless; the naturally firm temper had lost confidence in its power. The warrior's valor had degenerated into ferocity, reserve had become dissimulation, the refined and tender passion of the Valois was an insatiable thirst for pleasure. This great man, misprized, perverted, with every side of his noble spirit chafed to a sore, a King without power, a loving heart without a friend, torn a thousand ways by conflicting schemes, was, at four-and-twenty, the melancholy image of a man who has found everything wanting, who distrusts every one, who is ready to stake his all, even his life. Only lately had he understood his mission, his power, his resources, and the obstacles placed by his mother in the way of the pacification of the kingdom; and the light glowed in a broken lamp.

Two men, for whom the King had so great a regard that he had saved one from the massacre of Saint-Bartholomew,

and had dined with the other at a time when his enemies accused him of poisoning the King—his chief physician Jean Chapelain, and the great surgeon Ambroise Paré—had been sent for from the country by Catherine, and, obeying the summons in hot haste, arrived at the King's bedtime. They looked anxiously at their sovereign, and some of the courtiers made whispered inquiries, but they answered with due reserve, saying nothing of the sentence each had secretly pronounced. Now and again the King would raise his heavy eyelids and try to conceal from the bystanders the glance he shot at his mother. Suddenly he rose, and went to stand in front of the fireplace.

"Monsieur de Chiverni," said he, "why do you keep the title of Chancellor of Anjou and Poland? Are you our servant or our brother's?"

"I am wholly yours, Sire," replied Chiverni, with a bow.

"Well, then, come to-morrow; I mean to send you to Spain, for strange things are doing at the Court of Madrid, gentlemen."

The King looked at his wife and returned to his chair.

"Strange things are doing everywhere," he added in a whisper to Marshal Tavannes, one of the favorites of his younger days. And he rose to lead the partner of his youthful pleasures into the recess of an oriel window, saying to him:

"I want you; stay till the last. I must know whether you will be with me or against me. Do not look astonished. I am breaking the leading strings. My mother is at the bottom of all the mischief here. In three months I shall either be dead, or be really King. As you love your life, silence! You are in my secret with Solern and Villeroy. If the least hint is given, it will come from one of you three.—Do not keep too close to me; go and pay your court to my mother; tell her that I am dying, and that you cannot regret it, for that I am but a poor creature."

Charles IX. walked round the room leaning on his old favorite's shoulder, and discussing his sufferings with him, to mislead inquisitive persons; then, fearing that his coldness

might be too marked, he went to talk with the two Queens, calling Birague to his side.

Just then Pinard glided in at the door and came up to Queen Catherine, slipping in like an eel, close to the wall. He murmured two words in the Queen-mother's ear, and she replied with an affirmative nod. The King did not ask what this meant, but he went back to his chair with a scowl round the room of horrible rage and jealousy. This little incident was of immense importance in the eyes of all the Court. This exertion of authority without any appeal to the King was like the drop of water that makes the glass overflow. The young Queen and Countess Fieschi withdrew without the King's paying her the least attention, but the Queen-mother attended her daughter-in-law to the door. Though the misunderstanding between the mother and son lent enormous interest to the movements, looks, and attitude of Catherine and Charles IX., their cold composure plainly showed the courtiers that they were in the way; as soon as the Queen had gone they took their leave. At ten o'clock no one remained but certain intimate persons—the two Gondis, Tavannes, the Comte de Solern, Birague, and the Queen-mother.

The King sat plunged in the deepest melancholy. This silence was fatiguing. Catherine seemed at a loss; she wished to retire, and she wanted the King to attend her to the door, but Charles remained obstinately lost in thought; she rose to bid him good-night, Charles was obliged to follow her example; she took his arm, and went a few steps with him to speak in his ear these few words:

"Monsieur, I have matters of importance to discuss with you."

As she left, the Queen-mother met the eyes of the Gondis reflected in a glass, and gave them a significant glance which her son could not see—all the more so because he himself was exchanging meaning looks with the Comte de Solern and Villeroy; Tavannes was absorbed in thought.

"Sire," said the Maréchal de Retz, coming out of his medi-

tations, "you seem right royally bored. Do you never amuse yourself nowadays? Heaven above us! where are the times when we went gadding about the streets of nights?"

"Yes, those were good times," said the King, not without a sigh.

"Why not be off now?" said Monsieur de Birague, bowing himself out, with a wink at the Gondis.

"I always think of that time with pleasure," cried the Maréchal de Retz.

"I should like to see you on the roofs, Monsieur le Maréchal," said Tavannes. "*Sacré chat d'Italie,* if you might but break your neck," he added in an undertone to the King.

"I know not whether you or I should be nimblest at jumping across a yard or a street; but what I do know is, that neither of us is more afraid of death than the other," replied the Duc de Retz.

"Well, sir, will you come to scour the town as you did when you were young?" said the Master of the Wardrobe to the King.

Thus at four-and-twenty the unhappy King was no longer thought young, even by his flatterers. Tavannes and the King recalled, like two school-fellows, some of the good tricks they had perpetrated in Paris, and the party was soon made up. The two Italians, being dared to jump from roof to roof across the street, pledged themselves to follow where the King should lead. They all went to put on common clothes.

The Comte de Solern, left alone with the King, looked at him with amazement. The worthy German, though filled with compassion as he understood the position of the King of France, was fidelity and honor itself, but he had not a lively imagination. King Charles, surrounded by enemies, and trusting no one, not even his wife—who, not knowing that his mother and all her servants were inimical to him, had committed some little indiscretions—was happy to have found in Monsieur de Solern a devotion which justified complete confidence. Tavannes and Villeroy were only partly in the

secret. The Comte de Solern alone knew the whole of the King's schemes; and he was in every way very useful to his master, inasmuch as that he had a handful of confidential and attached men at his orders who obeyed him blindly. Monsieur de Solern, who held a command in the Archers of the Guard, had for some days been picking from among his men some who were faithful in their adherence to the King, to form a chosen company. The King could think of everything.

"Well, Solern," said Charles IX., "we were needing a pretext for spending a night out of doors. I had the excuse, of course, of Madame de Belleville; but this is better, for my mother can find out what goes on at Marie's house."

Monsieur de Solern, as he was to attend the King, asked if he might not go the rounds with some of his Germans, and to this Charles consented. By eleven o'clock the King, in better spirits now, set out with his three companions to explore the neighborhood of the Rue Saint-Honoré.

"I will take my lady by surprise," said Charles to Tavannes as they went along the Rue de l'Autruche.

To make this nocturnal ploy more intelligible to those who may be ignorant of the topography of old Paris, it will be necessary to explain the position of the Rue de l'Autruche. The part of the Louvre, begun by Henri II., was still being built amid the wreck of houses. Where the wing now stands looking over the Pont des Arts, there was at that time a garden. In the place of the Colonnade there were a moat and a drawbridge on which, somewhat later, a Florentine, the Maréchal d'Ancre, met his death. Beyond this garden rose the turrets of the Hôtel de Bourbon, the residence of the princes of that branch till the day when the Constable's treason (after he was ruined by the confiscation of his possessions, decreed by Francis I., to avoid having to decide between him and his mother) put an end to the trial that had cost France so dear, by the confiscation of the Constable's estates.

This château, which looked well from the river, was not destroyed till the time of Louis XIV.

The Rue de l'Autruche ran from the Rue Saint-Honoré, ending at the Hôtel de Bourbon on the quay. This street, named de l'Autriche on some old plans, and de l'Austruc on others, has, like many more, disappeared from the map. The Rue des Poulies would seem to have been cut across the ground occupied by the houses nearest to the Rue Saint-Honoré. Authors have differed, too, as to the etymology of the name. Some suppose it to be derived from a certain Hôtel d'Osteriche (*Osterrichen*) inhabited in the fourteenth century by a daughter of that house who married a French nobleman. Some assert that this was the site of the Royal Aviaries, whither, once on a time, all Paris crowded to see a living ostrich.

Be it as it may, this tortuous street was made notable by the residences of certain princes of the blood, who dwelt in the vicinity of the Louvre. Since the sovereign had deserted the Faubourg Saint-Antoine, where for several centuries he had lived in the Bastille, and removed to the Louvre, many of the nobility had settled near the palace. The Hôtel de Bourbon had its fellow in the old Hôtel d'Alençon in the Rue Saint-Honoré. This, the palace of the Counts of that name, always an appanage of the Crown, was at this time owned by Henri II.'s fourth son, who subsequently took the title of Duc d'Anjou, and who died in the reign of Henri III., to whom he gave no little trouble. The estate then reverted to the Crown, including the old palace, which was pulled down. In those days a prince's residence was a vast assemblage of buildings; to form some idea of its extent, we have only to go and see the space covered by the Hôtel de Soubise, which is still standing in the Marais. Such a palace included all the buildings necessary to these magnificent lives, which may seem almost problematical to many persons to see how poor is the state of a prince in these days. There were immense stables, lodgings for physicians, librarians, chancellor, chaplains, treasurers, officials, pages, paid servants, and lackeys, attached to the Prince's person.

Not far from the Rue Saint-Honoré, in a garden belonging

to the Hôtel, stood a pretty little house built in 1520 by command of the celebrated Duchesse d'Alençon, which had since been surrounded with other houses erected by merchants. Here the King had installed Marie Touchet. Although the Duc d'Alençon was engaged in a conspiracy against the King at that time, he was incapable of annoying him in such a matter.

As the King was obliged to pass by his lady's door on his way down the Rue Saint-Honoré, where at that time highway robbers had no opportunities within the Barrière des Sergents, he could hardly avoid stopping there. While keeping a lookout for some stroke of luck—a belated citizen to be robbed, or the watch to be thrashed—the King scanned every window, peeping in wherever he saw lights, to see what was going on, or to overhear a conversation. But he found his good city in a provokingly peaceful state. On a sudden, as he came in front of the house kept by a famous perfumer named René, who supplied the Court, the King was seized with one of those swift inspirations which are suggested by antecedent observation, as he saw a bright light shining from the topmost window of the roof.

This perfumer was strongly suspected of doctoring rich uncles when they complained of illness; he was credited at Court with the invention of the famous *Élixir à successions*—the Elixir of Inheritance—and had been accused of poisoning Jeanne d'Albret, Henri IV.'s mother, who was buried without her head having been opened, in spite of the express orders of Charles IX., as a contemporary tells us. For two months past the King had been seeking some stratagem to enable him to spy out the secrets of René's laboratory, whither Cosmo Ruggieri frequently resorted. Charles intended, if anything should arouse his suspicions, to take steps himself without the intervention of the Police or the Law, over whom his mother would exert the influence of fear or of bribery.

It is beyond all doubt that during the sixteenth century, and the years immediately preceding and following it, poisoning had been brought to a pitch of perfection which remains

unknown to modern chemistry, but which is indisputably proved by history. Italy, the cradle of modern science, was at that time the inventor and mistress of these secrets, many of which are lost. Romancers have made such extravagant use of this fact, that whenever they introduce Italians they make them play the part of assassins and poisoners.

But though Italy had then the monopoly of those subtle poisons of which historians tell us, we must regard her supremacy in toxicology merely as part of her pre-eminence in all branches of knowledge and in the arts, in which she led the way for all Europe. The crimes of the period were not hers alone; she served the passions of the age, as she built magnificently, commanded armies, painted glorious frescoes, sang songs, loved Queens, and directed politics. At Florence this hideous art had reached such perfection, that a woman dividing a peach with a duke could make use of a knife of which one side only was poisoned, and, eating the untainted half, dealt death with the other. A pair of perfumed gloves introduced a mortal malady by the pores of the hand; poison could be concealed in a bunch of fresh roses of which the fragrance, inhaled but once, meant certain death. Don Juan of Austria, it is said, was poisoned by a pair of boots.

So King Charles had a right to be inquisitive, and it is easy to imagine how greatly the dark suspicions which tormented him added to his eagerness to detect René in the act.

The old fountain, since rebuilt, at the corner of the Rue de l'Arbre-Sec, afforded this illustrious crew the necessary access to the roof of a house, which the King pretended that he wished to invade, not far from René's. Charles, followed by his companions, began walking along the roofs, to the great terror of the good folks awakened by these marauders, who would call to them, giving them some coarsely grotesque name, listen to family squabbles or love-makings, or do some vexatious damage.

When the two Gondis saw Tavannes and the King clambering along the roof adjoining René's, the Maréchal de Retz

sat down, saying he was tired, and his brother remained with him.

"So much the better," thought the King, glad to be quit of his spies.

Tavannes made fun of the two Italians, who were then left alone in the midst of perfect silence in a place where they had only the sky above them and the cats for listeners. And the brothers took advantage of this position to speak out thoughts which they never would have uttered elsewhere—thoughts suggested by the incidents of the evening.

"Albert," said the Grand Master to the Marshal, "the King will get the upper hand of the Queen; we are doing bad business so far as our fortunes are concerned by attaching ourselves to Catherine's. If we transfer our services to the King now, when he is seeking some support against his mother, and needs capable men to rely upon, we shall not be turned out like wild beasts when the Queen-mother is banished, imprisoned, or killed."

"You will not get far, Charles, by that road," the Marshal replied. "You will follow your master into the grave, and he has not long to live; he is wrecked by dissipation; Cosmo Ruggieri has foretold his death next year."

"A dying boar has often gored the hunter," said Charles de Gondi. "This plot of the Duc d'Alençon with the King of Navarre and the Prince de Condé, of which la Mole and Coconnas are taking the *onus,* is dangerous rather than useful. In the first place, the King of Navarre, whom the Queen-mother hopes to take in the fact, is too suspicious of her, and will have nothing to do with it. He means to get the benefit of the conspiracy and run none of the risks. And now, the last idea is to place the crown on the head of the Duc d'Alençon, who is to turn Calvinist."

"Budelone! Dolt that you are, do not you see that this plot enables our Queen to learn what the Huguenots can do with the Duc d'Alençon, and what the King means to do with the Huguenots? For the King is temporizing with them. And Catherine, to set the King riding on a wooden horse, will betray the plot which must nullify his schemes."

"Ay!" said Charles de Gondi, "by dint of taking our advice she can beat us at our own game. That is very good."

"Good for the Duc d'Anjou, who would rather be King of France than King of Poland; I am going to explain matters to him."

"You are going, Albert?"

"To-morrow. Is it not my duty to attend the King of Poland? I shall join him at Venice, where the Signori have undertaken to amuse him."

"You are prudence itself."

"*Che bestia!* I assure you solemnly that there is not the slightest danger for either of us at Court. If there were, should I leave? I would stick to our kind mistress."

"Kind!" said the Grand Master. "She is the woman to drop her tools if she finds them too heavy."

"*O coglione!* You call yourself a soldier, and are afraid of death? Every trade has its duties, and our duty is to Fortune. When we attach ourselves to monarchs who are the fount of all temporal power, and who protect and ennoble and enrich our families, we have to give them such love as inflames the soul of the martyr for heaven; when they sacrifice us for the throne we may perish, for we die as much for ourselves as for them, but our family does not perish.—*Ecco;* I have said!"

"You are quite right, Albert; you have got the old duchy of Retz."

"Listen to me," said the Duc de Retz. "The Queen has great hopes of the Ruggieri and their arts to reconcile her to her son. When that artful youth refused to have anything to do with René, our Queen easily guessed what her son's suspicions were. But who can tell what the King has in his pocket? Perhaps he is only doubting as to what fate he intends for his mother; he hates her, you understand? He said something of his purpose to the Queen, and the Queen talked of it to Madame de Fieschi; Madame de Fieschi carried it on to the Queen-mother, and since then the King has kept out of his wife's way."

"It was high time——" said Charles de Gondi.

"What to do?" asked the Marshal.

"To give the King something to do," replied the Grand Master, who, though he was on less intimate terms with Catherine than his brother, was not less clear-sighted.

"Charles," said de Retz gravely, "I have started on a splendid road; but if you want to be a Duke, you must, like me, be our mistress' ready tool. She will remain Queen; she is the strongest. Madame de Sauves is still devoted to her; and the King of Navarre and the Duc d'Alençon are devoted to Madame de Sauves; Catherine will always have them in leading strings under this King, as she will have them under King Henri III. Heaven send he may not be ungrateful!"

"Why?"

"His mother does too much for him."

"Hark! There is a noise in the Rue Saint-Honoré," cried Charles de Gondi. "René's door is being locked. Cannot you hear a number of men? They must have taken the Ruggieri."

"The devil! What a piece of prudence! The King has not shown his usual impetuosity. But where will he imprison them?—Let us see what is going on."

The brothers reached the corner of the Rue de l'Autruche at the moment when the King was entering his mistress' house. By the light of the torches held by the gatekeeper they recognized Tavannes and the Ruggieri.

"Well, Tavannes," the Grand Master called out as he ran after the King's companion, who was making his way back to the Louvre, "what adventures have you had?"

"We dropped on a full council of wizards, and arrested two who are friends of yours, and who will explain for the benefit of French noblemen by what means you, who are not Frenchmen, have contrived to clutch two Crown offices," said Tavannes, half in jest.

"And the King?" asked the Grand Master, who was not much disturbed by Tavannes' hostility.

"He is staying with his mistress."

"We have risen to where we stand by the most absolute devotion to our masters, a brilliant and noble career which you too have adopted, my dear Duke," replied the Maréchal de Retz.

The three courtiers walked on in silence. As they bid each other good-night, rejoining their retainers, who escorted them home, two men lightly glided along the Rue de l'Arche in the shadow of the wall. These were the King and the Comte de Solern, who soon reached the river-bank at a spot where a boat and rowers, engaged by the German Count, were awaiting them. In a few minutes they had reached the opposite shore.

"My mother is not in bed," cried the King, "she will see us; we have not made a good choice of our meeting-place."

"She will think some duel is in the wind," said Solern. "And how is she to distinguish who we are at this distance?"

"Well! Even if she sees me!" cried Charles IX. "I have made up my mind now."

The King and his friend jumped on shore, and hurried off towards the Pré aux Clercs. On arriving there, the Comte de Solern, who went first, parleyed with a man on sentry, with whom he exchanged a few words, and who then withdrew to a group of others.

Presently two men, who seemed to be princes by the way the outposts saluted them, left the spot where they were in hiding behind some broken fencing, and came to the King, to whom they bent the knee; but Charles IX. raised them before they could touch the ground, saying:

"No ceremony; here we are all gentlemen together."

These three were now joined by a venerable old man, who might have been taken for the Chancellor de l'Hôpital, but that he had died the year before. Then all four walked on as quickly as possible to reach a spot where their conversation could not be overheard by their retainers, and Solern followed them at a little distance to keep guard over the King. This faithful servant felt some doubts which Charles did not share,

for to him indeed life was too great a burden. The Count was the only witness to the meeting on the King's side.

It soon became interesting.

"Sire," said one of the speakers, "the Connétable de Montmorency, the best friend the King, your father, had, and possessed of all his secrets, agreed with the Maréchal de Saint-André that Madame Catherine should be sewn up in a sack and thrown into the river. If that had been done, many good men would be alive now."

"I have executions enough on my conscience, monsieur," replied the King.

"Well, Sire," said the youngest of the four gentlemen, "from the depths of exile Queen Catherine would still manage to interfere and find men to help her. Have we not everything to fear from the Guises, who, nine years since, schemed for a monstrous Catholic alliance, in which your Majesty is not included, and which is a danger to the throne? This alliance is a Spanish invention—for Spain still cherishes the hope of leveling the Pyrenees. Sire, Calvinism can save France by erecting a moral barrier between this nation and one that aims at the empire of the world. If the Queen-mother finds herself in banishment, she will throw herself on Spain and the Guises."

"Gentlemen," said the King, "I will have you to know that, with your help, and with peace established on a basis of confidence, I will undertake to make every soul in the kingdom quake. By God and every sacred relic! it is time that the Royal authority should assert itself. Understand this clearly; so far, my mother is right, power is slipping from your grasp, as it is from mine. Your estates, your privileges are bound to the throne; when you have allowed religion to be overthrown, the hands you are using as tools will turn against the Monarchy and against you.

"I have had enough of fighting ideas with weapons that cannot touch them. Let us see whether Protestantism can make its way if left to itself; above all, let us see what the spirit of that faction means to attack. The Admiral, God

be merciful to him, was no enemy of mine. He swore to me that he would restrain the revolt within the limits of spiritual feeling, and in the temporal kingdom secure mastery to the King and submissive subjects. Now, gentlemen, if the thing is still in your power, set an example, and help your sovereign to control the malcontents who are disturbing the peace of both parties alike. War robs us of all our revenue, and ruins the country; I am weary of this troubled State—so much so, that, if it should be absolutely necessary, I would sacrifice my mother. I would do more; I would have about me a like number of Catholics and of Protestants, and I would hang Louis XI.'s axe over their heads to keep them equal. If Messieurs de Guise plot a Holy Alliance which endangers the Crown, the executioner shall begin on them.

"I understand the griefs of my people, and am quite ready to cut freely at the nobles who bring trouble on our country. I care little for questions of conscience; I mean henceforth to have submissive subjects who will work, under my rule, at the prosperity of the State.

"Gentlemen, I give you ten days to treat with your adherents, to break up your plots, and return to me, who will be a father to you. If you are refractory, you will see great changes. I shall make use of smaller men who, at my bidding, will rush upon the great lords. I will follow the example of a king who pacified his realm by striking down greater men than you are who dared to defy him. If Catholic troops are wanting, I can appeal to my brother of Spain to defend a threatened throne; nay, and if I need a Minister to carry out my will, he will lend me the Duke of Alva."

"In that event, Sire, we can find Germans to fight your Spaniards," said one of the party.

"I may remind you, cousin," said Charles IX. coldly, "that my wife's name is Elizabeth of Austria; your allies on that side might fail you. But take my advice; let us fight this alone without calling in the foreigner. You are the object of my mother's hatred, and you care enough for me to play the part of second in my duel with her—well, then, listen.

You stand so high in my esteem, that I offer you the office of High Constable; you will not betray us as the other has done."

The Prince thus addressed took the King's hand in a friendly grasp, exclaiming:

"God's 'ounds, brother, that is indeed forgiving evil! But, Sire, the head cannot move without the tail, and our tail is hard to drag along. Give us more than ten days. We still need at least a month to make the rest hear reason. By the end of that time we shall be the masters."

"A month, so be it; Villeroy is my only plenipotentiary. Take no word but his, whatever any one may say."

"One month," said the three other gentlemen; "that will be enough time."

"Gentlemen," said the King, "we are but five, all men of mettle. If there is any treachery, we shall know with whom to deal."

The three gentlemen left the King with every mark of deep respect and kissed his hand.

As the King recrossed the Seine, four o'clock was striking by the Louvre clock.

Queen Catherine was still up.

"My mother is not gone to bed," said Charles to the Comte de Solern.

"She too has her forge," said the German.

"My dear Count, what must you think of a king who is reduced to conspiracy?" said Charles IX. bitterly, after a pause.

"I think, Sire, that if you would only allow me to throw that woman into the river, as our young friend said, France would soon be at peace."

"Parricide!—and after Saint-Bartholomew's!" said the King. "No, no—Exile. Once fallen, my mother would not have an adherent or a partisan."

"Well, then, Sire," the Count went on, "allow me to take her into custody now, at once, and escort her beyond the frontier; for by to-morrow she will have won you round."

"Well," said the King, "come to my forge; no one can hear us there. Besides, I am anxious that my mother should know nothing of the arrest of the Ruggieri. If she knows I am within, the good lady will suspect nothing, and we will concert the measures for arresting her."

When the King, attended by Solern, went into the low room which served as his workshop, he smiled as he pointed to his forge and various tools.

"I do not suppose," said he, "that of all the kings France may ever have, there will be another with a taste for such a craft. But when I am really King, I shall not forge swords; they shall all be sheathed."

"Sire," said the Comte de Solern, "the fatigues of tennis, your work at the forge, hunting, and—may I say it?—love-making, are chariots lent you by the Devil to hasten your journey to Saint-Denis."

"Ah, Solern!" said the King sadly, "if only you could feel the fire they have set burning in my heart and body. Nothing can slake it.—Are you sure of the men who are guarding the Ruggieri?"

"As sure as of myself."

"Well, in the course of this day I shall have made up my mind. Think out the means of acting, and I will give you my final instructions at five this evening, at Madame de Belleville's."

The first gleams of daybreak were struggling with the lights in the King's workshop, where the Comte de Solern had left him alone, when he heard the door open and saw his mother, looking like a ghost in the gloom. Though Charles IX. was highly strung and nervous, he did not start, although under the circumstances this apparition had an ominous and grotesque aspect.

"Monsieur," said she, "you are killing yourself——"

"I am fulfilling my horoscopes," he retorted, with a bitter smile. "But you, madame, are you as ill as I am?"

"We have both watched through the night, monsieur, but

with very different purpose. When you were setting out to confer with your bitterest enemies in the open night, and hiding it from your mother, with the connivance of Tavannes and the Gondis, with whom you pretended to be scouring the town, I was reading dispatches which prove that a terrible conspiracy is hatching, in which your brother the Duc d'Alençon is implicated with your brother-in-law, the King of Navarre, the Prince de Condé, and half the nobility of your kingdom. Their plan is no less than to snatch the Crown from you by taking possession of your person. These gentlemen have already a following of fifty thousand men, all good soldiers."

"Indeed!" said the King incredulously.

"Your brother is becoming a Huguenot," the Queen went on.

"My brother joining the Huguenots?" cried Charles, brandishing the iron bar he held.

"Yes. The Duc d'Alençon, a Huguenot at heart, is about to declare himself. Your sister, the Queen of Navarre, has scarcely a tinge of affection left for you. She loves Monsieur le Duc d'Alençon, she loves Bussy, and she also loves little la Mole."

"What a large heart!" said the King.

"Little la Mole, to grow great," the Queen went on, "can think of no better means than making a King of France to his mind. Then, it is said, he is to be High Constable."

"That damned Margot!" cried the King. "This is what comes of her marrying a heretic——"

"That would be nothing; but then there is the head of the younger branch, whom you have placed near the throne against my warnings, and who only wants to see you all kill each other! The House of Bourbon is the enemy of the House of Valois. Mark this, monsieur, a younger branch must always be kept in abject poverty, for it is born with the spirit of conspiracy, and it is folly to give it weapons when it has none, or to leave them in its possession when it takes them. The younger branches must be impotent for

mischief—that is the law of sovereignty. The sultans of Asia observe it.

"The proofs are upstairs in my closet, whither I begged you to follow me when we parted last night, but you had other projects. Within a month, if we do not take a high hand, your fate will be that of Charles the Simple."

"Within a month!" exclaimed Charles, amazed at the coincidence of this period with the term fixed by the princes that very night. "In a month we shall be the masters," thought he to himself, repeating their words. "You have proofs, madame?" he asked aloud.

"They are unimpeachable, monsieur; they are supplied by my daughter Marguerite. Terrified by the probable outcome of such a coalition, in spite of her weakness for your brother d'Alençon, the throne of the Valois lay, for once, nearer to her heart than all her amours. She asks indeed, as the reward of her revelation, that la Mole shall go scot free; but that popinjay seems to me to be a rogue we ought to get rid of, as well as the Comte de Coconnas, your brother d'Alençon's right-hand man. As to the Prince de Condé, that boy would agree to anything so long as I may be flung into the river; I do not know if that is his idea of a handsome return on his wedding-day for the pretty wife I got him.

"This is a serious matter, monsieur. You spoke of predictions! I know of one which says that the Bourbons will possess the throne of the Valois; and if we do not take care, it will be fulfilled. Do not be vexed with your sister, she has acted well in this matter."

"My son," she went on, after a pause, with an assumption of tenderness in her tone, "many evil-minded persons, in the interest of the Guises, want to sow dissension between you and me, though we are the only two persons in the realm whose interests are identical. Reflect. You blame yourself now, I know, for Saint-Bartholomew's night; you blame me for persuading you to it. But Catholicism, monsieur, ought to be the bond of Spain, France, and Italy, three nations

which by a secretly and skilfully worked scheme may, in the course of time, be united under the House of Valois. Do not forfeit your chances by letting the cord slip which includes these three kingdoms in the pale of the same faith.

"Why should not the Valois and the Medici carry out, to their great glory, the project of Charles V., who lost his head? Let those descendants of Jane the Crazy people the new world which they are grasping at. The Medici, masters of Florence and Rome, will subdue Italy to your rule; they will secure all its advantages by a treaty of commerce and alliance, and recognize you as their liege lord for the fiefs of Piedmont, the Milanese, and Naples over which you have rights. These, monsieur, are the reasons for the war to the death we are waging with the Huguenots. Why do you compel us to repeat these things?

"Charlemagne made a mistake when he pushed northwards. France is a body of which the heart is on the Gulf of Lyons, and whose two arms are Spain and Italy. Thus we should command the Mediterranean, which is like a basket into which all the wealth of the East is poured to the benefit of the Venetians now, in the teeth of Philip II.

"And if the friendship of the Medici and your inherited rights can thus entitle you to hope for Italy, force, or alliance, or perhaps inheritance, may give you Spain. There you must step in before the ambitious House of Austria, to whom the Guelphs would have sold Italy, and who still dream of possessing Spain. Though your wife is a daughter of that line, humble Austria, hug her closely to stifle her! There lie the enemies of your dominion, since from thence comes aid for the Reformers.—Do not listen to men who would profit by our disagreement, and who fill your head with trouble by representing me as your chief enemy at home. Have I hindered you from having an heir? Is it my fault that your mistress has a son and your wife only a daughter? Why have you not by this time three sons, who would cut off all this sedition at the root?—Is it my part, monsieur, to reply to these questions? If you had a son, would Monsieur d'Alençon conspire against you?"

As she spoke these words, Catherine fixed her eyes on Charles IX. with the fascinating gaze of a bird of prey on its victim. The daughter of the Medici was beautiful in her way: her real feelings illumined her face, which, like that of a gambler at the green-table, was radiant with ambitious greed. Charles IX. saw her no longer as the mother of one man, but, as she had been called, the mother of armies and empires (*mater castrorum*). Catherine had spread the pinions of her genius, and was boldly soaring in the realm of high politics of the Medici and the Valois, sketching the vast plans which had frightened Henri II., and which, transmitted by the Medici to Richelieu, were stored in the Cabinet of the House of Bourbon. But Charles IX., seeing his mother take so many precautions, supposed them to be necessary, and wondered to what end she was taking them. He looked down; he hesitated; his distrust was not to be dispelled by words.

Catherine was astonished to see what deeply founded suspicion lurked in her son's heart.

"Well, monsieur," she went on, "do you not choose to understand me? What are we, you and I, compared with the eternity of a royal Crown? Do you suspect me of any purposes but those which must agitate us who dwell in the sphere whence empires are governed?"

"Madame," said he, "I will follow you to your closet—we must act——"

"Act?" cried Catherine. "Let them go their way and take them in the act; the law will rid you of them. For God's sake, monsieur, let them see us smiling."

The Queen withdrew. The King alone remained standing for a minute, for he had sunk into extreme dejection.

"On which side are the snares?" he said aloud. "Is it she who is deceiving me, or they? What is the better policy? *Deus! discerne causam meam,*" he cried, with tears in his eyes. "Life is a burden to me. Whether natural or compulsory, I would rather meet death than these contradictory torments," he added, and he struck the hammer on his anvil

with such violence that the vaults of the Louvre quaked. "Great God!" he exclaimed, going out and looking up at the sky, "Thou for whose holy religion I am warring, give me the clearness of Thine eyes to see into my mother's heart by questioning the Ruggieri."

The little house inhabited by the Lady of Belleville, where Charles had left his prisoners, was the last but one in the Rue de l'Autruche, near the Rue Saint-Honoré. The street-gate, guarded by two little lodges built of brick, looked very plain at a time when gates and all their accessories were so elaborately treated. The entrance consisted of two stone pillars, diamond-cut, and the architrave was graced with the reclining figure of a woman holding a cornucopia. The gate, of timber covered with heavy iron scroll-work, had a wicket peephole at the level of the eye for spying any one who desired admittance. In each lodge a porter lived, and Charles' caprice insisted that a gatekeeper should be on the watch day and night.

There was a little courtyard in front of the house paved with Venetian mosaic. At that time, when carriages had not been invented, and ladies rode on horseback or in litters, the courtyards could be splendid with no fear of injury from horses or vehicles. We must constantly bear these facts in mind to understand the narrowness of the streets, the small extent of the forecourts, and various other details of the dwellings of the fifteenth century.

The house, of one story above the ground floor, had at the top a sculptured frieze, on which rested a roof sloping up from all the four sides to a flat space at the top. The sides were pierced by dormer-windows adorned with architraves and side-posts, which some great artist had chiseled into delicate arabesques. All the three windows of the first-floor rooms were equally conspicuous for this embroidery in stone, thrown into relief by the red-brick walls. On the ground floor a double flight of outside steps, elegantly sculptured—the balcony being remarkable for a true lovers' knot—led to the

house door, decorated in the Venetian style with stone cut into pointed lozenges, a form of ornament that was repeated on the window-jambs on each side of the door.

A garden laid out in the fashion of the time, and full of rare flowers, occupied a space behind the house of equal extent with the forecourt. A vine hung over the walls. A silver pine stood in the centre of a grass plot; the flower borders were divided from the turf by winding paths leading to a little bower of clipped yews at the further end. The garden walls, covered with a coarse mosaic of colored pebbles, pleased the eye by a richness of color that harmonized with the hues of the flowers. The garden front of the house, like the front to the court, had a pretty balcony from the middle window over the door; and on both façades alike the architectural treatment of this middle window was carried up to the frieze of the cornice, with a bow that gave it the appearance of a lantern. The sills of the other windows were inlaid with fine marbles let into the stone.

Notwithstanding the perfect taste evident in this building, it had a look of gloom. It was shut out from the open day by neighboring houses and the roofs of the Hôtel d'Alençon, which cast their shadow over the courtyard and garden; then absolute silence prevailed. Still, this silence, this subdued light, this solitude, were restful to a soul that could give itself up to a single thought, as in a cloister where we may meditate, or in a snug home where we may love.

Who can fail now to conceive of the interior elegance of this dwelling, the only spot in all his kingdom where the last Valois but one could pour out his heart, confess his sufferings, give play to his taste for the arts, and enjoy the poetry he loved—pleasures denied him by the cares of his most ponderous royalty. There alone were his lofty soul and superior qualities appreciated; there alone, for a few brief months, the last of his life, could he know the joys of fatherhood, to which he abandoned himself with the frenzy which his presentiment of an imminent and terrible death lent to all his actions.

In the afternoon of this day, Marie was finishing her toilet in her oratory—the ladies' boudoir of that time. She was arranging the curls of her fine black hair, so as to leave a few locks to turn over a new velvet coif, and was looking attentively at herself in the mirror.

"It is nearly four o'clock! That interminable Council must be at an end by now," said she to herself. "Jacob is back from the Louvre, where they are greatly disturbed by reason of the number of councillors convened, and by the duration of the sitting. What can have happened, some disaster? Dear Heaven! does *he* know how the spirit is worn by waiting in vain? He is gone hunting, perhaps. If he is amused, all is well. If I see him happy, I shall forget my sorrows——"

She pulled down her bodice round her waist, that there might not be a wrinkle in it, and turned to see how her dress fitted in profile; but then she saw the King reclining on a couch. The carpeted floors deadened the sound of footsteps so effectually, that he had come in without being heard.

"You startled me," she said, with a cry of surprise, which she instantly checked.

"You were thinking of me, then?" said the King.

"When am I not thinking of you?" she asked him, sitting down by his side.

She took off his cap and cloak, and passed her hands through his hair as if to comb it with her fingers. Charles submitted without speaking. Marie knelt down to study her royal Master's pale face, and discerned in it the lines of terrible fatigue and of a more devouring melancholy than any she had ever been able to scare away. She checked a tear, and kept silence, not to irritate a grief she as yet knew nothing of by some ill-chosen word. She did what tender wives do in such cases; she kissed the brow seamed with precocious wrinkles and the hollow cheeks, trying to breathe the freshness of her own spirit into that careworn soul through its infusion into gentle caresses, which, however, had no effect. She raised her head to the level of the King's, embrac-

ing him fondly with her slender arms, and then laid her face on his laboring breast, waiting for the opportune moment to question the stricken man.

"My Charlot, will you not tell your poor, anxious friend what are the thoughts that darken your brow and take the color from your dear, red lips?"

"With the exception of Charlemagne," said he, in a dull, hollow voice, "every King of France of the name of Charles has come to a miserable end."

"Pooh!" said she. "What of Charles VIII.?"

"In the prime of life," replied the King, "the poor man knocked his head against a low doorway in the château d'Amboise, which he was decorating splendidly, and he died in dreadful pain. His death gave the Crown to our branch."

"Charles VII. reconquered his kingdom."

"Child, he died"—and the King lowered his voice—"of starvation, in the dread of being poisoned by the Dauphin, who had already caused the death of his fair Agnes. The father dreaded his son. Now, the son dreads his mother!"

"Why look back on the past?" said she, remembering the terrible existence of Charles VI.

"Why not, dear heart? Kings need not have recourse to diviners to read the fate that awaits them; they have only to study history. I am at this time engaged in trying to escape the fate of Charles the Simple, who was bereft of his crown, and died in prison after seven years' captivity."

"Charles V. drove out the English!" she cried triumphantly.

"Not he, but du Guesclin; for he, poisoned by Charles of Navarre, languished in sickness."

"But Charles IV.?" said she.

"He married three times and had no heir, in spite of the masculine beauty that distinguished the sons of Philip the Handsome. The first Valois dynasty ended in him. The second Valois will end in the same way. The Queen has only brought me a daughter, and I shall die without leaving any child to come, for a minority would be the greatest

misfortune that could befall the kingdom. Besides, if I had a son, would he live?—Charles is a name of ill-omen, Charlemagne exhausted all the luck attending it. If I could be King of France again, I would not be called Charles X."

"Who then aims at your crown?"

"My brother d'Alençon is plotting against me. I see enemies on every side——"

"Monsieur," said Marie, with an irresistible pout. "Tell me some merrier tales."

"My dearest treasure," said the King vehemently, "never call me *Monsieur,* even in jest. You remind me of my mother, who incessantly offends me with that word. I feel as if she deprived me of my crown. She says 'My son' to the Duc d'Anjou, that is to say, the King of Poland."

"Sire," said Marie, folding her hands as if in prayer, "there is a realm where you are adored, which your Majesty fills entirely with glory and strength; and there the word Monsieur means my gentle lord."

She unclasped her hands, and with a pretty action pointed to her heart. The words were so sweetly musical—*musiquées,* to use an expression of the period, applied to love songs—that Charles took Marie by the waist, raised her with the strength for which he was noted, seated her on his knee, and gently rubbed his forehead against the curls his mistress had arranged with such care.

Marie thought this a favorable moment; she ventured on a kiss or two, which Charles allowed rather than accepted; then, between two kisses, she said:

"If my people told the truth, you were scouring Paris all night, as in the days when you played the scapegrace younger son?"

"Yes," said the King, who sat lost in thought.

"Did not you thrash the watch and rob certain good citizens?—And who are the men placed under my guard, and who are such criminals that you have forbidden all communication with them? No girl was ever barred in with greater severity than these men, who have had neither food nor drink.

Solern's Germans have not allowed any one to go near the room where you left them. Is it a joke? Or is it a serious matter?"

"Yes," said the King, rousing himself from his reverie, "last night I went scampering over the roofs with Tavannes and the Gondis. I wanted to have the company of my old comrades in folly. But our legs are not what they were; we did not dare jump across the streets. However, we crossed two courtyards by leaping from roof to roof. The last time, however, when we alighted on a gable close by this, as we clung to the bar of a chimney, we decided, Tavannes and I, that we could not do it again. If either of us had been alone, he would not have tried it."

"You were the first to jump, I will wager."

The King smiled.

"I know why you risk your life so."

"Hah, fair sorceress!"

"You are weary of life."

"Begone with witchcraft! I am haunted by it!" said the King, grave once more.

"My witchcraft is love," said she, with a smile. "Since the happy day when you first loved me, have I not always guessed your thoughts? And if you will suffer me to say so, the thoughts that torment you to-day are not worthy of a King."

"Am I a King?" said he bitterly.

"Can you not be King? What did Charles VII. do, whose name you bear? He listened to his mistress, my lord, and he won back his kingdom, which was invaded by the English then as it is now by the adherents of the New Religion. Your last act of State opened the road you must follow: Exterminate heresy."

"You used to blame the stratagem," said Charles, "and now——"

"It is accomplished," she put in. "Besides, I am of Madame Catherine's opinion. It was better to do it yourself than to leave it to the Guises."

"Charles VII. had only men to fight against, and I have to battle with ideas," the King went on. "You may kill men; you cannot kill words! The Emperor Charles V. gave up the task; his son, Don Philip, is spending himself in the attempt. We shall die of it, we kings. On whom can I depend? On my right, with the Catholics I find the Guises threatening me; on my left, the Calvinists will never forgive the death of my poor Father Coligny, nor the blood-letting of August; besides, they want to be rid of us altogether. And in front of me, my mother——"

"Arrest her; reign alone," said Marie, whispering in his ear.

"I wanted to do so yesterday—but I do not to-day. You speak of it lightly enough."

"There is no such great distance between the daughter of an apothecary and the daughter of a leech," said Marie Touchet, who would often laugh at the parentage falsely given her.

The King knit his brows.

"Marie, take no liberties. Catherine de' Medici is my mother, and you ought to tremble at——"

"But what are you afraid of?"

"Poison!" cried the King, beside himself.

"Poor boy!" said Marie, swallowing her tears, for so much strength united to so much weakness moved her deeply. "Oh!" she went on, "how you make me hate Madame Catherine, who used to seem so kind; but her kindness seems to be nothing but perfidy. Why does she do me so much good and you so much evil? While I was away in Dauphiné I heard a great many things about the beginning of your reign which you had concealed from me; and the Queen your mother seems to have been the cause of all your misfortunes."

"How?" said the King, with eager interest.

"Women whose soul and intentions are pure rule the men they love through their virtues; but women who do not truly wish them well find a motive power in their evil inclinations. Now the Queen has turned many fine qualities in you into

vices, and made you believe that your bad ones were virtues. Was that acting a mother's part?—Be a tyrant like Louis XI., make everybody dreadfully afraid of you, imitate Don Philip, banish the Italians, hunt out the Guises, and confiscate the estates of the Calvinists; you will rise to stand in solitude, and you will save the Crown. The moment is favorable; your brother is in Poland."

"We are two infants in politics," said Charles bitterly. "We only know how to love. Alas! dear heart, yesterday I could think of all this; I longed to achieve great things. Puff! my mother has blown down my house of cards. From afar difficulties stand out as clearly as mountain peaks. I say to myself, 'I will put an end to Calvinism; I will bring Messieurs de Guise to their senses; I will cut adrift from the Court of Rome; I will rely wholly on the people of the middle class;' in short, at a distance everything looks easy, but when we try to climb the mountains, the nearer we get, the more obstacles we discern.

"Calvinism in itself is the last thing the party-leaders care about; and the Guises, those frenzied Catholics, would be in despair if the Calvinists were really exterminated. Every man thinks of his own interests before all else, and religious opinions are but a screen for insatiable ambition. Charles IX.'s party is the weakest of all; those of the King of Navarre, of the King of Poland, of the Duc d'Alençon, of the Condés, of the Guises, of my mother, form coalitions against each other, leaving me alone even in the Council Chamber. In the midst of so many elements of disturbance my mother is the stronger, and she has just shown me that my plans are inane. We are surrounded by men who defy the law. The axe of Louis XI. of which you speak is not in our grasp. The Parlement would never sentence the Guises, nor the King of Navarre, nor the Condés, nor my brothers. It would think it was setting the kingdom in a blaze. What is wanted is the courage to command murder; the throne must come to that, with these insolent wretches who have nullified justice; but where can I find faithful hands? The Council I held this

morning disgusted me with everything—treachery on all sides, antagonistic interests everywhere!

"I am tired of wearing the crown; all I ask is to die in peace."

And he sank into gloomy somnolence.

"Disgusted with everything!" echoed Marie Touchet sadly, but respecting her lover's heavy torpor.

Charles was, in fact, a prey to utter prostration of mind and body, resulting from over-fatigue of every faculty, and enhanced by the dejection caused by the vast scale of his misfortunes and the evident impossibility of overcoming them in the face of such a multiplicity of difficulties as genius itself takes alarm at. The King's depression was proportionate to the height to which his courage and his ideas had soared during the last few months; and now a fit of nervous melancholy, part, in fact, of his malady, had come over him as he left the long sitting of the Council he had held in his closet. Marie saw that he was suffering from a crisis when everything is irritating and importunate—even love; so she remained on her knees, her head in the King's lap as he sat with his fingers buried in her hair without moving, without speaking, without sighing, and she was equally still. Charles IX. was sunk in the lethargy of helplessness; and Marie, in the dark despair of a loving woman, who can see the border-line ahead where love must end.

Thus the lovers sat for some little time in perfect silence, in the mood when every thought is a wound, when the clouds of a mental storm hide even the remembrance of past happiness.

Marie believed herself to be in some sort to blame for this terrible dejection. She wondered, not without alarm, whether the King's extravagant joy at welcoming her back, and the vehement passion she could not contend with, were not helping to wreck his mind and frame. As she looked up at her lover, her eyes streaming with tears that bathed her face, she saw tears in his eyes too and on his colorless cheeks. This sympathy, uniting them even in sorrow, touched Charles IX.

so deeply, that he started up like a horse that feels the spur. He put his arm round Marie's waist, and before she knew what he was doing had drawn her down on the couch.

"I will be King no more!" he said. "I will be nothing but your lover, and forget everything in that joy. I will die happy, and not eaten up with the cares of a throne."

The tone in which he spoke, the fire that blazed in eyes, just now so dull, instead of pleasing Marie, gave her a terrible pang; at that moment she blamed her love for contributing to the illness of which the King was dying.

"You forget your prisoners," said she, starting up suddenly.

"What do I care about the men? They have my permission to kill me."

"What? Assassins!" said she.

"Do not be uneasy, we have them safe, dear child.—Now, think not of them, but of me. Say, do you not love me?"

"Sire!" she cried.

"Sire!" he repeated, flashing sparks from his eyes, so violent was his first surge of fury at his mistress' ill-timed deference. "You are in collusion with my mother."

"Great God!" cried Marie, turning to the picture over her praying-chair, and trying to get to it to put up a prayer. "Oh! make him understand me!"

"What!" said the King sternly. "Have you any sin on your soul?"

And still holding her in his arms, he looked deep into her eyes. "I have heard of the mad passion of one d'Entrague for you," he went on, looking wildly at her, "and since their grandfather Capitaine Balzac married a Visconti of Milan, those rascals hesitate at nothing."

Marie gave the King such a look of pride that he was ashamed. Just then the cry was heard of the infant Charles de Valois from the adjoining room; he was just awake, and his nurse was no doubt bringing him to his mother.

"Come in, la Bourguignonne," said Marie, taking the child from his nurse and bringing him to the King. "You are

more of a child than he," she said, half angry, but half pleased.

"He is a fine boy," said Charles IX., taking his son in his arms.

"No one but me can know how like you he is," said Marie. "He has your smile and ways already."

"What, so young?" said the King, smiling.

"Men will never believe such things," said she; "but look, my Charlot, play with him, look at him—now, am I not right?"

"It is true," said the King, startled by a movement on the infant's part, which struck him as the miniature reproduction of a trick of his own.

"Pretty flower!" said his mother. "He will never go away from me; he will never make me unhappy."

The King played with the child, tossing it, kissing it with entire devotion, speaking to it in those vague and foolish words, the onomatopœia of mothers and nurses: his voice was childlike, his brow cleared, joy came back to his saddened countenance; and when Marie saw that her lover had forgotten everything, she laid her head on his shoulder and whispered in his ear:

"Will not you tell me, my Charlot, why you put assassins in my keeping, and who these men are, and what you intend to do with them? And whither were you going across the roofs? I hope there was no woman in the case."

"Then you still love me so well?" said the King, caught by the bright flash of one of those questioning looks which women can give at a critical moment.

"You could doubt me," replied she, as the tears gathered under her beautiful girlish eyelids.

"There are women in my adventure, but they are witches. Where was I?"

"We were quite near here, on the gable of a house," said Marie. "In what street?"

"In the Rue Saint-Honoré, my jewel," said the King, who seemed to have recovered himself, and who, as he recalled his

ideas, wanted to give his mistress some notion of the scene that was about to take place here. "As I crossed it in pursuit of some sport, my eyes were attracted by a bright light in a top window of the house inhabited by René, my mother's perfumer and glover—yours too, the whole Court's. I have strong suspicions as to what goes on in that man's house, and if I am poisoned that is where the poison is prepared."

"I give him up to-morrow," said Marie.

"What, you have still dealt with him since I left him?" said the King. "My life was here," he added gloomily, "and here no doubt they have arranged for my death."

"But, my dear boy, I have but just come home from Dauphiné with our Dauphin," said she, with a smile, "and I have bought nothing of René since the Queen of Navarre died.—Well, go on; you climbed up to René's roof——?"

"Yes," the King went on. "In a moment I, followed by Tavannes, had reached a spot whence, without being seen, I could see into the devil's kitchen, and note certain things which led me to take strong measures. Do you ever happen to have noticed the attics that crown that damned Florentine's house? All the windows to the street are constantly kept shut excepting the last, from which the Hôtel de Soissons can be seen, and the column my mother had erected for her astrologer Cosmo Ruggieri. There is a room in this top story with a corridor lighted from the inner yard, so that in order to see what is being done within, a man must get to a perch which no one would ever think of climbing, the coping of a high wall which ends against the roof of René's house. The creatures who placed the alembics there to distil death, trusted to the faint hearts of the Parisians to escape inspection; but they counted without their Charles de Valois. I crept along the gutter, and supported myself against the window jamb with my arm round the neck of a monkey that is sculptured on it."

"And what did you see, dear heart?" said Marie, in alarm.

"A low room where deeds of darkness are plotted," replied the King. "The first thing on which my eyes fell was a tall

old man seated in a chair, with a magnificent beard like old l'Hôpital's, and dressed, like him, in black velvet. The concentrated rays of a brightly burning lamp fell on his high forehead, deeply furrowed by hollow lines, on a crown of white hair and a calm, thoughtful face, pale with vigils and study. His attention was divided between a manuscript on parchment several centuries old, and two lighted stoves on which some heretical mixtures were cooking. Neither the floor nor the ceiling was visible; they were so covered with animals hung up there, skeletons, dried herbs, minerals, and drugs, with which the place was stuffed; here some books and retorts, with chests full of instruments for magic and astrology; there diagrams for horoscopes, phials, wax figures, and perhaps the poisons he concocts for René in payment for the shelter and hospitality bestowed on him by my mother's glover.

"Tavannes and I were startled, I can tell you, at the sight of this diabolical arsenal; for merely at the sight of it one feels spellbound, and but that my business is to be King of France, I should have been frightened. 'Tremble for us both,' said I to Tavannes.

"But Tavannes' eyes were riveted on the most mysterious object. On a couch by the old man's side lay a girl at full length, of the strangest beauty, as long and slender as a snake, as white as an ermine, as pale as death, as motionless as a statue. Perhaps it was a woman just dug out of her grave, for she seemed to be still wrapped in her shroud; her eyes were fixed, and I could not see her breathe. The old wretch paid no sort of heed to her. I watched him so curiously that his spirit I believe passed into me. By dint of studying him, at last I admired that searching eye, keen and bold, in spite of the chills of age; that mouth, mobile with thoughts that came from what seemed a single fixed desire, graven in a myriad wrinkles. Everything in the man spoke of a hope which nothing can discourage and nothing dismay. His attitude, motionless but full of thrilling life, his features so chiseled, so deeply cut by a passion that has

done the work of the sculptor's tool, that mind dead-set on some criminal or scientific purpose, that searching intelligence on the track of Nature though conquered by her, and bent, without having broken, under the burden of an enterprise it will never give up, threatening creation with fire borrowed from itself—— I was fascinated for a moment.

"That old man was more a King than I, for his eye saw the whole world and was its master. I am determined to temper no more swords: I want to float over abysses, as that old man does; his science seems to me a sovereignty. In short, I believe in these occult sciences."

"You, the eldest son, and the defender of the Holy Catholic, Apostolic, and Roman Church!" cried Marie.

"I."

"Why, what has come over you? Go on; I will be frightened for you, and you shall be brave for me."

"The old man looked at the clock and rose," the King went on. "He left the room, how I could not see, but I heard him open the window towards the Rue Saint-Honoré. Presently a light shone out, and then I saw another light, answering to the old man's, by which we could perceive Cosmo Ruggieri on the top of the column.

"'Oh, ho! They understand each other,' said I to Tavannes, who at once thought the whole affair highly suspicious, and was quite of my opinion that we should seize these two men, and at once make a search in their abominable workshop. But before proceeding to a raid, we wanted to see what would happen. By the end of a quarter of an hour the door of the laboratory opened, and Cosmo Ruggieri, my mother's adviser—the bottomless pit in which all the Court secrets are buried, of whom wives crave help against their husbands and their lovers, and husbands and lovers take counsel against faithless women, who gains money out of the past and the future, taking it from every one, who sells horoscopes, and is supposed to know everything,—that half-demon came in saying to the old man, 'Good-evening, brother.'

"He had with him a horrible little old woman, toothless, hunchbacked, crooked, and bent like a lady's marmoset, but far more hideous; she was wrinkled like a withered apple, her skin was of the color of saffron, her chin met her nose, her mouth was a hardly visible slit, her eyes were like the black spots of the deuce on dice, her brow expressed a bitter temper, her hair fell in gray locks from under a dirty coif; she walked with a crutch; she stank of devilry and the stake; and she frightened us, for neither Tavannes nor I believed that she was a real woman; God never made one so horrible as she.

"She sat down on a stool by the side of the fair white serpent with whom Tavannes was falling in love.

"The two brothers paid no heed to either the old woman or the young one, who, side by side, formed a horrible contrast. On one hand life in death, on the other death in life."

"My sweet poet!" cried Marie, kissing the King.

"'Good-evening, Cosmo,' the old alchemist replied. And then both men looked at the stove.—'What is the power of the moon to-night?' the old man asked Cosmo.—'Why, *caro Lorenzo,*' my mother's astrologer replied, 'the high tides of September are not yet over: it is impossible to read anything in the midst of such confusion.'—'And what did the Orient say this evening?'—'He has just discovered,' said Cosmo, 'that there is a creative force in the air which gives back to the earth all it takes from it; he concludes, with us, that everything in this world is the outcome of a slow transformation, but all the various forms are of one and the same matter.'—'That is what my predecessor thought,' replied Lorenzo. 'This morning Bernard Palissy was telling me that the metals are a result of compression, and that fire, which parts all things, joins all things also; fire has the power of compressing as well as that of diffusing. That worthy has a spark of genius in him.'

"Though I was placed where I could not be seen, Cosmo went up to the dead girl, and taking her hand, he said, 'There is some one near! Who is it?'—'The King,' said she.

"I at once showed myself, knocking on the window-pane; Ruggieri opened the window, and I jumped into this wizard's kitchen, followed by Tavannes.

"'Yes, the King,' said I to the two Florentines, who seemed terror-stricken. 'In spite of your furnaces and books, your witches and your learning, you could not divine my visit.—I am delighted to see the famous Lorenzo Ruggieri, of whom the Queen my mother speaks with such mystery,' said I to the old man, who rose and bowed.—'You are in this kingdom without my consent, my good man. Whom are you working for here, you, who from father to son have dwelt in the heart of the House of the Medici? Listen to me. You have your hand in so many purses, that the most covetous would by this have had their fill of gold; you are far too cunning to plunge unadvisedly into criminal courses, but you ought not either to rush like feather-brains into this kitchen; you must have some secret schemes, you who are not content with gold or with power? Whom do you serve, God or the Devil? What are you concocting here? I insist on the whole truth. I am honest man enough to hear and keep the secret of your undertakings, however blamable they may be. So tell me everything without concealment. If you deceive me, you will be sternly dealt with. But Pagan or Christian, Calvinist or Mohammedan, you have my Royal word for it that you may leave the country unpunished, even if you have some peccadilloes to confess. At any rate, I give you the remainder of this night and to-morrow morning to examine your consciences, for you are my prisoners, and you must now follow me to a place where you will be guarded like a treasure.'

"Before yielding to my authority, the two Florentines glanced at each other with a wily eye, and Lorenzo Ruggieri replied that I might be certain that no torture would wring their secrets from them; that in spite of their frail appearance, neither pain nor human feeling had any hold on them. Confidence alone could win from their lips what their mind had in its keeping. I was not to be surprised if at that mo-

ment they treated on an equal footing with a King who acknowledged no one above him but God, for that their ideas also came from God alone. Hence they demanded of me such confidence as they would grant. So, before pledging themselves to answer my questions without reserve, they desired me to place my left hand in the young girl's and my right hand in the old woman's. Not choosing to let them suppose that I feared any devilry, I put out my hands. Lorenzo took the right and Cosmo the left, and each placed one in the hand of a woman, so there I was like Jesus Christ between the two thieves. All the time the two witches were studying my hands, Cosmo held a mirror before me, desiring me to look at myself, while his brother talked to the two women in an unknown tongue. Neither Tavannes nor I could catch the meaning of a single sentence.

"We set seals on every entrance to this laboratory before bringing away the men, and Tavannes undertook to keep guard till Bernard Palissy and Chapelain, my physician-in-chief, shall go there to make a close examination of all the drugs stored or made there. It was to hinder their knowing anything of the search going on in their kitchen, and to prevent their communicating with any one whatever outside—for they might have sent some message to my mother—that I brought these two demons to be shut up here with Solern's Germans to watch them, who are as good as the stoutest prison-walls. René himself is confined to his room under the eye of Solern's groom, and the two witches also. And now, sweetheart, as I hold the key of the Cabala, the kings of Thunes, the chiefs of witchcraft, the princes of Bohemia, the masters of the future, the inheritors of all the famous soothsayers, I will read and know your heart, and at last we will know what is to become of us."

"I shall be very glad if you can lay my heart bare," said Marie without showing the least alarm.

"I know why necromancers do not frighten you; you cast spells yourself."

"Will you not have some of these peaches?" said she, offer-

ing him some fine fruit on a silver-gilt plate. "Look at these grapes and pears; I went myself to gather them all at Vincennes."

"Then I will eat some, for there can be no poison in them but the philters distilled from your fingers."

"You ought to eat much fruit, Charles; it would cool your blood, which you scorch by such violent living."

"And ought I not to love you less too?"

"Perhaps——" said she. "If what you love is bad for you, —and I have thought so—I should find power in my love to refuse to let you have it. I adore Charles far more than I love the King, and I want the man to live without the troubles that make him sad and anxious."

"Royalty is destroying me."

"It is so," replied she. "If you were only a poor prince like your brother-in-law the King of Navarre, that wretched debauchee who has not a sou or a stitch of his own, who has merely a poor little kingdom in Spain where he will never set foot, and Béarn in France, which yields him scarcely enough to live on, I should be happy, much happier than if I were really Queen of France."

"But are you not much more than the Queen? King Charles is hers only for the benefit of the kingdom, for the Queen, after all, is part of our politics."

Marie smiled with a pretty little pout, saying:

"We all know that, my liege.—And my sonnet—is it finished?"

"Dear child, it is as hard to write verses as to draw up an edict of pacification. I will finish them for you soon. Ah God! life sits lightly on me here, would I could never leave you!—But I must, nevertheless, examine the two Florentines. By all the sacred relics, I thought one Ruggieri quite enough in France, and behold there are two! Listen, my dearest heart, you have a good mother-wit, you would make a capital lieutenant of police, for you detect everything——"

"Well, Sire, we women take all we dread for granted, and to us what is probable is certain; there is all our subtlety in two words."

"Well, then, help me to fathom these two men. At this moment every determination I may come to depends on this examination. Are they innocent? Are they guilty?—Behind them stands my mother."

"I hear Jacob on the winding stair," said Marie.

Jacob was the King's favorite body servant, who accompanied him in all his amusements; he now came to ask whether his Master would wish to speak to the two prisoners.

At a nod of consent, the mistress of the house gave some orders.

"Jacob," said she, "make every one in the place leave the house, excepting the nurse and Monsieur le Dauphin d'Auvergne—they may stay. Do you remain in the room downstairs; but first of all shut the windows, draw the curtains, and light the candles."

The King's impatience was so great that, while these preparations were being made, he came to take his place in a large settle, and his pretty mistress seated herself by his side in the nook of a wide, white marble chimney-place, where a bright fire blazed on the hearth. In the place of a mirror hung a portrait of the King, in a red velvet frame. Charles rested his elbow on the arm of the seat, to contemplate the two Italians at his ease.

The shutters shut, and the curtains drawn, Jacob lighted the candles in a sort of candelabrum of chased silver, placing it on a table at which the two Florentines took their stand—seeming to recognize the candlestick as the work of their fellow-townsman, Benvenuto Cellini. Then the effect of this rich room, decorated in the King's taste, was really brilliant. The russet tone of the tapestries looked better than by daylight. The furniture, elegantly carved, reflected the light of the candles and of the fire in its shining bosses. The gilding, judiciously introduced, sparkled here and there like eyes, and gave relief to the brown coloring that predominated in this nest for lovers.

Jacob knocked twice, and at a word brought in the two Florentines. Marie Touchet was immediately struck by the

grand presence which distinguished Lorenzo in the sight of great and small alike. This austere and venerable man, whose silver beard was relieved against an overcoat of black velvet, had a forehead like a marble dome. His severe countenance, with two black eyes that darted points of fire, inspired a thrill as of a genius emerged from the deepest solitude, and all the more impressive because its power was not dulled by contact with other men. It was as the steel of a blade that has not yet been used.

Cosmo Ruggieri wore the Court dress of the period. Marie nodded to the King, to show him that he had not exaggerated the picture, and to thank him for introducing her to this extraordinary man.

"I should have liked to see the witches too," she whispered.

Charles IX., sunk again in brooding, made no reply; he was anxiously flipping off some crumbs of bread that happened to lie on his doublet and hose.

"Your science cannot work on the sky, nor compel the sun to shine, Messieurs de Florence," said the King, pointing to the curtains which had been drawn to shut out the gray mist of Paris. "There is no daylight."

"Our science, Sire, enables us to make a sky as we will," said Lorenzo Ruggieri. "The weather is always fair for those who work in a laboratory by the light of a furnace."

"That is true," said the King.—"Well, father," said he, using a word he was accustomed to employ to old men. "explain to us very clearly the object of your studies."

"Who will guarantee us impunity?"

"The word of a King!" replied Charles, whose curiosity was greatly excited by this question.

Lorenzo Ruggieri seemed to hesitate, and Charles exclaimed:

"What checks you? we are alone."

"Is the King of France here?" asked the old man.

Charles IX. reflected for a moment, then he replied, "No."

"But will he not come?" Lorenzo urged.

"No," replied Charles, restraining an impulse of rage.

The imposing old man took a chair and sat down. Cosmo, amazed at his boldness, dared not imitate his brother.

Charles IX. said, with severe irony:

"The King is not here, monsieur, but you are in the presence of a lady whose permission you ought to wait for."

"The man you see before you, madame," said the grand old man, "is as far above kings as kings are above their subjects, and you shall find me courteous, even when you know my power."

Hearing these bold words, spoken with Italian emphasis, Charles and Marie looked at each other and then at Cosmo, who, with his eyes fixed on his brother, seemed to be asking himself, "How will he get himself out of the awkward position we are in?"

In fact, one person only could appreciate the dignity and skill of Lorenzo Ruggieri's first move; not the King, nor his young mistress, over whom the elder man had cast the spell of his audacity, but his not less wily brother Cosmo. Though he was superior to the cleverest men at Court, and perhaps to his patroness Catherine de' Medici, the astrologer knew Lorenzo to be his master.

The learned old man, buried in solitude, had gauged the sovereigns of the earth, almost all of them wearied out by the perpetual shifting of politics; for at that time great crises were so sudden, so far reaching, so fierce, and so unexpected! He knew their satiety, their lassitude; he knew with what eagerness they pursued all that was new, strange, or uncommon; and, above all, how glad they were to rise now and then to intellectual regions so as to escape from the perpetual struggle with men and things. To those who have exhausted politics, nothing remains but abstract thought; this Charles V. had proved by his abdication.

Charles IX., who made sonnets and swords to recreate himself after the absorbing business of an age when the Throne was in not less ill-odor than the King, and when Royalty had only its cares and none of its pleasures, could not but be strangely startled by Lorenzo's audacious negation

of his power. Religious impiety had ceased to be surprising at a time when Catholicism was closely inquired into; but the subversion of all religion, assumed as a groundwork for the wild speculations of mystical arts, naturally amazed the King, and roused him from his gloomy absence of mind. Besides, a victory to be won over mankind was an undertaking which would make every other interest seem trivial in the eyes of the Ruggieri. An important debt to be paid depended on this idea to be suggested to the King; the brothers could not ask for this, and yet they must obtain it. The first thing was to make Charles IX. forget his suspicions by making him jump at some new idea.

The two Italians knew full well that in this strange game their lives were at stake; and the glances—deferent but proud—that they exchanged with Marie and the King, whose looks were keen and suspicious, were a drama in themselves.

"Sire," said Lorenzo Ruggieri, "you have asked for the truth. But to show her to you naked, I must bid you sound the well, the pit, from which she will rise. I pray you let the gentleman, the poet, forgive us for saying what the Eldest Son of the Church may regard as blasphemy—I do not believe that God troubles himself about human affairs."

Though fully resolved to preserve his sovereign indifference, Charles IX. could not control a gesture of surprise.

"But for that conviction, I should have no faith in the miraculous work to which I have devoted myself. But, to carry it out, I must believe it; and if the hand of God rules all things, I am a madman. So, be it known to the King, we aim at winning a victory over the immediate course of human nature.

"I am an alchemist, Sire; but do not suppose, with the vulgar, that I am striving to make gold. The composition of gold is not the end, but only an incident of our researches; else we should not call our undertaking *Magnum Opus,* the great work. The Great Work is something far more ambitious than that. If I, at this day, could recognize the presence of God in matter, the fire of the furnaces that have

been burning for centuries would be extinguished to-morrow at my bidding.

"But make no mistake—to deny the direct interference of God is not to deny God. We place the Creator of all things far above the level to which religions reduce Him. Those who hope for immortality are not to be accused of Atheism. Following the example of Lucifer, we are jealous of God, and jealousy is a proof of violent love. Though this doctrine lies at the root of our labors, all adepts do not accept it. Cosmo," said the old man, indicating his brother, "Cosmo is devout; he pays for masses for the repose of our father's soul, and he goes to hear them. Your mother's astrologer believes in the Divinity of Christ, in the Immaculate Conception, and in Transubstantiation; he believes in the Pope's indulgences, and in hell—he believes in an infinite number of things.—His hour is not yet come, for I have read his horoscope; he will live to be nearly a hundred. He will live through two reigns, and see two Kings of France assassinated——"

"Who will be——?" asked the King.

"The last of the Valois and the first of the Bourbons," replied Lorenzo. "But Cosmo will come to my way of thinking. In fact, it is impossible to be an alchemist and a Catholic; to believe in the dominion of man over matter, and in the supreme power of mind."

"Cosmo will live to be a hundred?" said the King, knitting his brows in the terrible way that was his wont.

"Yes, Sire," said Lorenzo decisively. "He will die peacefully in his bed."

"If it is in your power to predict the moment of your death, how can you be ignorant of the result of your inquiries?" asked the King. And he smiled triumphantly as he looked at Marie Touchet.

The brothers exchanged a swift look of satisfaction

"He is interested in alchemy," thought they, "so we are safe."

"Our prognostics are based on the existing relations of man to nature; but the very point we aim at is the complete alteration of those relations," replied Lorenzo.

The King sat thinking.

"But if you are sure that you must die, you are assured of defeat," said Charles IX.

"As our predecessors were" replied Lorenzo, lifting his hand and letting it drop with a solemn and emphatic gesture, as dignified as his thoughts. "But your mind has rushed on to the goal of our attempts, Sire; we must come back again, Sire! Unless you know the ground on which our edifice is erected, you may persist in saying that it will fall, and judge this science, which has been pursued for centuries by the greatest minds, as the vulgar judge it."

The King bowed assent.

"I believe, then, that this earth belongs to man, that he is master of it, and may appropriate all the forces, all the elements thereof. Man is not a creature proceeding directly from the hand of God, but the result of the principle diffused throughout the infinite Ether, wherein myriads of beings are produced; and these have no resemblance to each other between star and star, because the conditions of life are everywhere different. Ay, my Liege, the motion we call life has its source beyond all visible worlds; creation draws from it as the surrounding conditions may require, and the minutest beings share in it by taking all they are able, at their own risk and peril; it is their part to defend themselves from death. This is the sum total of alchemy.

"If man, the most perfect animal on this globe, had within him a fraction of the Godhead, he could not perish—but he does perish. To escape from this dilemma, Socrates and his school invented the soul. I—the successor of the great unknown kings who have ruled this science—I am for the old theories against the new; I believe in the transmutation of matter which I can see, as against the eternity of a soul which I cannot see. I do not acknowledge the world of souls. If such a world existed, the substances, of which the

beautiful combination produces your body—and which in madame are so dazzling—would not separate and resolve themselves after your death to return each to its own place; the water to water, the fire to fire, the metal to metal, just as when my charcoal is burnt its elements are restored to their original molecules.

"Though you say that something lives on, it is not we ourselves; all that constitutes our living self perishes.

"Now, it is my living self that I desire to perpetuate beyond the common term of life; it is the present manifestation for which I want to secure longer duration. What! trees live for centuries, and men shall live but for years, while those are passive and we are active; while they are motionless and speechless, and we walk and talk! No creature on earth ought to be superior to us either in power or permanency. We have already expanded our senses; we can see into the stars. We ought to be able to extend our life. I place life above power. Of what use is power if life slips from us?

"A rational man ought to have no occupation but that of seeking—not whether there is another life—but the secret on which our present life is based, so as to be able to prolong it at will!—This is the desire that has silvered my hair. But I walk on boldly in the darkness, leading to battle those intellects which share my faith. Life will some day be ours."

"But how?" cried the King, starting to his feet.

"The first condition of our faith is the belief that this world is for man; you must grant me that," said Lorenzo.

"Well and good, so be it!" said Charles de Valois, impatient, but already fascinated.

"Well, then, Sire, if we remove God from this world, what is left but man? Now let us survey our domain. The material world is composed of elements; those elements have a first principle within them. All these principles resolve themselves into one which is gifted with motion. The number Three is the formula of creation: Matter, Motion, Production!"

"Proof, proof? Pause there!" cried the King.

"Do you not see the effects?" replied Lorenzo. "We have analyzed in our crucibles the acorn from which an oak would have risen as well as the embryo which would have become a man; from these small masses of matter a pure element was derived to which some force, some motion would have been added. In the absence of a Creator, must not that first principle be able to assume the external forms which constitute our world? For the phenomena of life are everywhere the same. Yes, in metals as in living beings, in plants as in man, life begins by an imperceptible embryo which develops spontaneously. There is a first principle! We must detect it at the point where it acts on itself, where it is one, where it is a Principle before it is a Creature, a cause before it is an effect; then we shall see it Absolute—formless, but capable of assuming all the forms we see it take.

"When we are face to face with this particle or atom, and have detected its motion from the starting point, we shall know its laws; we are thenceforth its masters, and able to impose on it the form we may choose, among all we see; we shall possess gold, having the world, and can give ourselves centuries of life to enjoy our wealth. That is what we seek, my disciples and I. All our powers, all our thoughts are directed to that search; nothing diverts us from it. One hour wasted on any other passion would be stolen from our greatness! You have never found one of your hunting-dogs neglectful of the game or the death, and I have never known one of my persevering subjects diverted by a woman or a thought of greed.

"If the adept craves for gold and power, that hunger comes of our necessities; he clutches at fortune as a thirsty hound snatches a moment from the chase to drink, because his retorts demand a diamond to consume, or ignots to be reduced to powder. Each one has his line of work. This one seeks the secret of vegetable nature, he studies the torpid life of plants, he notes the parity of motion in every species and the parity of nutrition; in every case he discerns that sun,

air, and water are needed for fertility and nourishment. Another investigates the blood of animals. A third studies the laws of motion generally and its relation to the orbits of the stars. Almost all love to struggle with the intractable nature of metals; for though we find various elements in everything, we always find metals the same throughout, down to their minutest particles.

"Hence the common error as to our labors. Do you see all these patient toilers, these indefatigable athletes, always vanquished, and always returning to the assault? Humanity, Sire, is at our heels, as your huntsman is at the heels of the pack. It cries to us, 'Hurry on! Overlook nothing! Sacrifice everything, even a man—you who sacrifice yourselves! Hurry onward! Cut off the head and hands of Death, my foe!'

"Yes, Sire, we are animated by a sentiment on which the happiness depends of generations to come. We have buried many men—and what men!—who have died in the pursuit. When we set foot on that road it is not to work for ourselves: we may perish without discovering the secret. And what a death is that of a man who does not believe in a future life! We are glorious martyrs: we bear the selfishness of the whole race in our hearts; we live in our successors. On our way we discover secrets which enrich the mechanical and liberal arts. Our furnaces shed gleams of light which help society to possess more perfect forms of industry. Gunpowder was discovered in our retorts; we shall conquer the thunder yet. Our patient vigils may overthrow politics."

"Can that be possible!" cried the King, sitting up again on the settle.

"Why not?" replied the Grand Master of the New Templars. "*Tradidit mundum disputationibus!* God has given us the world. Listen to this once again! Man is lord on earth and matter is his. Every means, every power is at his service. What created us? A motion. What power keeps life in us? A motion. And should not science grasp this motion? Nothing on earth is lost, nothing flies off from our

planet to go elsewhere; if it were so, the stars would fall on one another. The waters of the Deluge are all here, and not a drop lost. Around us, above, below, are the elements whence have proceeded the innumerable millions of men who have trodden the earth, before and since the Deluge. What is it that remains to be done? To detect the disintegrating force; on the other hand, to discover the combining force. We are the outcome of a visible toil. When the waters covered our globe, men came forth from them who found the elements of life in the earth's covering, in the atmosphere, and in food. Earth and air, then, contain the first principle of human transformations; these go on under our eyes, by the agency of what is under our eyes; hence we can discover the secret by not confining our efforts to the span of one man's life, but making the task endure as long as mankind itself. We have, in fact, attacked matter as a whole; Matter, in which I believe, and which I, Grand Master of our Order, am bent on penetrating.

"Christopher Columbus gave a world to the King of Spain; I am seeking to give the King of France a people that shall never die.—I, an outpost on the remotest frontier which cuts us off from the knowledge of things, a patient student of atoms, I destroy forms, I dissolve the bonds of every combination, I imitate Death to enable me to imitate Life. In short, I knock incessantly at the door of Creation, and shall still knock till my latest day. When I die, my knocker will pass into other hands not less indefatigable, as unknown giants bequeathed it to me.

"Fabulous images, never understood, such as those of Prometheus, of Ixion, of Adonis, of Pan, etc., which are part of the religious beliefs of every people and in every age, show us that this hope had its birth with the human race. Chaldæa, India, Persia, Egypt, Greece, and the Moors have transmitted Magian lore, the highest of all the occult sciences, the storehouse of the results of generations of watchers. Therein lay the bond of the noble and majestic Order of the Temple. When he burned the Templars, a predecessor of yours, Sire,

only burned men; their secrets remain with us. The reconstruction of the Temple is the watchword of an unrecognized people, a race of intrepid seekers, all looking to the Orient of life, all brethren, all inseparable, united by an idea, stamped with the seal of toil. I am the sovereign of this people, their chief by election and not by birth. I guide them all towards the essence of life! Grand Master, Rosicrucians, companions, adepts, we all pursue the invisible molecule which escapes our crucibles, and still evades our sight; but we shall make ourselves eyes manifold more powerful than those bestowed on us by nature; we shall get to the primitive atom, the corpuscular element so perseveringly sought by all the sages who have preceded us in the sublime pursuit.

"Sire, when a man stands astride on that abyss, and has at his command divers so intrepid as my brethren, other human interests look very small; hence we are not dangerous. Religious disputes and political struggles are far from us; we are immeasurably beyond them. Those who contend with nature do not condescend to take men by the throat.

"Moreover, every result in our science is appreciable; we can measure every effect, we can predict it, whereas in the combinations which include men and their interests everything is unstable. We shall submit the diamond to our crucible; we shall make diamonds; we shall make gold! Like one of our craft at Barcelona, we shall make ships move by the help of a little water and fire. We shall dispense with the wind, nay, we shall make the wind, we shall make light and renew the face of empires by new industries!—But we will never stoop to mount a throne to be *gehennaed* by nations."

Notwithstanding his desire to avoid being entrapped by Florentine cunning, the King, as well as his simple-minded mistress, was by this time caught and carried away in the rhetoric and rhodomontade of this pompous and specious flow of words. The lovers' eyes betrayed how much they were dazzled by the vision of mysterious riches spread out before them; they saw, as it were, subterranean caverns in long per-

spective full of toiling gnomes. The impatience of curiosity dissipated the alarms of suspicion.

"But, then," exclaimed the King, "you are great politicians, and can enlighten us."

"No, Sire," said Lorenzo simply.

"Why not?" asked the King.

"Sire, it is given to no one to be able to predict what will come of a concourse of some thousands of men; we may be able to tell what one man will do, how long he will live, and whether he will be lucky or unlucky; but we cannot tell how several wills thrown together will act, and any calculation of the swing of their interests is even more difficult, for interests are men *plus* things: only in solitude can we discern the general aspect of the future. The Protestantism that is devouring you will be devoured in its turn by its practical outcome, which, in its day, will become a theory too. Europe, so far, has not gone further than religion; to-morrow it will attack Royalty."

"Then the night of Saint-Bartholomew was a great conception?"

"Yes, Sire: for when the people triumph, they will have their Saint-Bartholomew. When Religion and Royalty are swept away, the people will attack the great, and after the great they will fall upon the rich. Finally, when Europe is no more than a dismembered herd of men for lack of leaders, it will be swallowed up by vulgar conquerors. The world has presented a similar spectacle twenty times before, and Europe is beginning again. Ideas devour the ages as men are devoured by their passions. When man is cured, human nature will cure itself perhaps. Science is the soul of mankind, and we are its pontiffs; and those who study the soul care but little for the body."

"How far have you gone?" asked the King.

"We move but slowly; but we never lose what we have once conquered."

"So you, in fact, are the King of the Wizards," said Charles IX., piqued at finding himself so small a personage in the presence of this man.

The imposing Grand Master of Adepts flashed a look at him that left him thunder-stricken.

"You are the King of men," replied he; "I am the King of Ideas. Besides, if there were real wizards, you could not have burned them!" he added, with a touch of irony. "We too have our martyrs."

"But by what means," the King went on, "do you cast nativities? How did you know that the man near your window last night was the King of France? What power enabled one of your race to foretell to my mother the fate of her three sons? Can you, the Grand Master of the Order that would fain knead the world,—can you, I say, tell me what the Queen my mother is thinking at this moment?"

"Yes, Sire."

The answer was spoken before Cosmo could pull his brother's coat to warn him.

"You know why my brother, the King of Poland, is returning home?"

"Yes, Sire."

"And why?"

"To take your place."

"Our bitterest enemies are our own kith and kin," cried the King, starting up in a fury, and striding up and down the room. "Kings have no brothers, no sons, no mother! Coligny was right; my executioners are in the conventicles, they are at the Louvre. You are either impostors or regicides! —Jacob, call in Solern."

"My Lord," said Marie Touchet, "the Ruggieri have your word of honor. You have chosen to eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge; do not complain of its bitterness."

The King smiled with an expression of deep contempt; his material sovereignty seemed small in his eyes in comparison with the supreme intellectual sovereignty of old Lorenzo Ruggieri. Charles IX. could scarcely govern France; the Grand Master of the Rosicrucians commanded an intelligent and submissive people.

"Be frank; I give you my word as a gentleman that your

reply, even if it should contain the avowal of the worst crimes, shall be as though it had never been spoken," the King said. "Do you study poisons?"

"To know what will secure life, it is needful to know what will cause death."

"You have the secret of many poisons?"

"Yes, but in theory only, and not in practice; we know them, but do not use them."

"Has my mother asked for any?"

"The Queen-mother, Sire, is far too clever to have recourse to such means. She knows that the sovereign who uses poison shall perish by poison; the Borgias, and Bianca, Grand Duchess of Tuscany, are celebrated examples of the dangers incurred by those who use such odious means. At Court everything is known. You can kill a poor wretch outright; of what use, then, is it to poison him? But if you attempt the life of conspicuous persons, what chance is there of secrecy? Nobody could have fired at Coligny but you, or the Queen-mother, or one of the Guises. No one made any mistake about that. Take my word for it, in politics poison cannot be used twice with impunity; princes always have successors.

"As to smaller men, if, like Luther, they become sovereigns by the power of ideas, by killing them you do not kill their doctrine.—The Queen is a Florentine; she knows that poison can only be the instrument of private vengeance. My brother, who has never left her since she came to France, knows how deeply Madame Diane aggrieved her; she never thought of poisoning her, and she could have done so. What would the King your father have said? No woman would have been more thoroughly justified, or more certain of impunity. But Madame de Valentinois is alive to this day."

"And the magic of wax images?" asked the King.

"Sire," said Cosmo, "these figures are so entirely innocuous that we lend ourselves to such magic to satisfy blind passions, like physicians who give bread pills to persons who fancy themselves sick. A desperate woman imagines that

by stabbing the heart of an image she brings disaster on the faithless lover it represents. What can we say? These are our taxes."

"The Pope sells indulgences," said Lorenzo Ruggieri, smiling.

"Does my mother make use of such images?"

"Of what use would such futile means be to her who can do what she will?"

"Could Queen Catherine save you at this moment?" asked Charles ominously.

"We are in no danger, Sire," said Lorenzo calmly. "I knew before I entered this house that I should leave it safe and sound, as surely as I know the ill-feeling that the King will bear my brother a few days hence; but, even if he should run some risk, he will triumph. Though the King reigns by the sword, he also reigns by justice," he added, in allusion to the famous motto on a medal struck for Charles IX.

"You know everything; I shall die before long, and that is well," returned the King, hiding his wrath under feverish impatience. "But how will my brother die, who, according to you, is to be Henri III.?"

"A violent death."

"And Monsieur d'Alençon?"

"He will never reign."

"Then Henri de Bourbon will be King?"

"Yes, Sire."

"And what death will he die?"

"A violent death."

"And when I am dead, what will become of madame?" asked the King, turning to Marie Touchet.

"Madame de Belleville will marry, Sire."

"You are impostors!—Send them away, my Lord," said Marie Touchet.

"Dear heart, the Ruggieri have my word as a gentleman," said Charles, smiling. "Will Marie have children?"

"Yes—and madame will live to be more than eighty."

"Must I have them hanged?" said the King to his mis-

tress.—"And my son, the Comte d'Auvergne?" said Charles, rising to fetch the child.

"Why did you tell him that I should marry?" said Marie Touchet to the two brothers during the few moments when they were alone.

"Madame," replied Lorenzo with dignity, "the King required us to tell the truth, and we told it."

"Then it is true?" said she.

"As true as that the Governor of Orleans loves you to distraction."

"But I do not love him," cried she.

"That is true, madame," said Lorenzo. "But your horoscope shows that you are to marry the man who at this present loves you."

"Could you not tell a little lie for my sake?" said she with a smile. "For if the King should believe your forecast——"

"Is it not necessary that he should believe in our innocence?" said Cosmo, with a glance full of meaning. "The precautions taken by the King against us have given us reason, during the time we spent in your pretty jail, to suppose that the occult sciences must have been maligned in his ears."

"Be quite easy," replied Marie; "I know him, and his doubts are dispelled."

"We are innocent," said the old man haughtily.

"So much the better; for at this moment the King is having your laboratory searched and your crucibles and phials examined by experts."

The brothers looked at each other and smiled.

Marie took this smile for the irony of innocence; but it meant: "Poor simpletons! Do you suppose that if we know how to prepare poisons, we do not also know how to conceal them?"

"Where are the King's people, then?" asked Cosmo.

"In René's house," replied Marie; and the Ruggieri exchanged a glance which conveyed from each to each the same thought, "The Hôtel de Soissons is inviolable!"

The King had so completely thrown off his suspicions, that

when he went to fetch his son, and Jacob intercepted him to give him a note written by Chapelain, he opened it in the certainty of finding in it what his physician told him concerning his visit to the laboratory, where all that had been discovered bore solely on alchemy.

"Will he live happy?" asked the King, showing his infant son to the two alchemists.

"This is Cosmo's concern," said Lorenzo, turning to his brother.

Cosmo took the child's little hand and studied it carefully.

"Monsieur," said Charles IX. to the elder man, "if you are compelled to deny the existence of the spirit to believe that your enterprise is possible, tell me how it is that you can doubt that which constitutes your power. The mind you desire to annihilate is the torch that illumines your search. Ah, ha! Is not that moving while denying the fact of motion?" cried he, and pleased at having hit on this argument, he looked triumphantly at his mistress.

"Mind," said Lorenzo Ruggieri, "is the exercise of an internal sense, just as the faculty of seeing various objects and appreciating their form and color is the exercise of our sight. That has nothing to do with what is assumed as to another life. Mind—thought—is a faculty which may cease even during life with the forces that produce it."

"You are logical," said the King with surprise. "But alchemy is an atheistical science."

"Materialist, Sire, which is quite a different thing. Materialism is the outcome of the Indian doctrines transmitted through the mysteries of Isis to Chaldæa and Egypt, and brought back to Greece by Pythagoras, one of the demi-gods among men; his doctrine of transmigration is the mathematics of materialism, the living law of its phases. Each of the different creations which make up the earthly creation possesses the power of retarding the impulse that drags it into another form."

"Then alchemy is the science of sciences!" cried Charles IX., fired with enthusiasm. "I must see you at work."

"As often as you will, Sire. You cannot be more eager than the Queen your mother."

"Ah! That is why she is so much attached to you!" cried the King.

"The House of Medici has secretly encouraged our research for almost a century past."

"Sire," said Cosmo, "this child will live nearly a hundred years; he will meet with some checks, but will be happy and honored, having in his veins the blood of the Valois."

"I will go to see you," said the King, who had recovered his good humor. "You can go."

The brothers bowed to Marie and Charles IX. and withdrew. They solemnly descended the stairs, neither looking at each other nor speaking, they did not even turn to look up at the windows from the courtyard, so sure were they that the King's eye was on them; and, in fact, as they turned to pass through the gate, they saw Charles IX. at a window.

As soon as the alchemist and the astrologer were in the Rue de l'Autruche, they cast a look in front and behind to see that no one was either following them or waiting for them, and went on as far as the Louvre moat without speaking a word; but there, finding that they were alone, Lorenzo said to Cosmo in the Florentine Italian of the time:

"Affè d'Iddio! como le abbiamo infinocchiato!" (By God, we have caught them finely!)

"Gran mercés! a lui sta di spartojarsi"—(Much good may it do him; he must make what he can of it)—said Cosmo. "May the Queen do as much for me! We have done a good stroke for her."

Some days after this scene, which had struck Marie Touchet no less than the King, in one of those moments when in the fulness of joy the mind is in some sort released from the body, Marie exclaimed:

"Charles, I understand Lorenzo Ruggieri; but Cosmo said nothing."

"That is true," said the King, startled by this sudden flash

of light, "and there was as much falsehood as truth in what they said. Those Italians are as slippery as the silk they spin."

This suspicion explains the hatred of Cosmo that the King betrayed on the occasion of the trial on the conspiracy of la Mole and Coconnas. When he found that Cosmo was one of the contrivers of that plot, the King believed himself duped by the two Italians; for it proved to him that his mother's astrologer did not devote himself exclusively to studying the stars, fulminating powder and final atoms. Lorenzo had then left the country.

In spite of many persons' incredulity of such things, the events which followed this scene confirmed the prophecies uttered by the Ruggieri.

The King died three months later. The Comte de Gondi followed Charles IX. to the tomb, as he had been told that he would by his brother, the Maréchal de Retz, a friend of the Ruggieri, and a believer in their foresight.

Marie Touchet married Charles de Balzac, Marquis d'Entragues, Governor of Orleans, by whom she had two daughters. The more famous of these two, the Comte d'Auvergne's half-sister, was Henri IV.'s mistress, and at the time of Biron's conspiracy tried to place her brother on the throne of France and oust the Bourbons.

The Comte d'Auvergne, made Duc d'Angoulême, lived till the reign of Louis XIV. He coined money in his province, altering the superscription; but Louis XIV. did not interfere, so great was his respect for the blood of the Valois.

Cosmo lived till after the accession of Louis XIII.; he saw the fall of the House of Medici in France, and the overthrow of the Concini. History has taken care to record that he died an atheist—that is to say, a materialist.

The Marquise d'Entragues was more than eighty when she died.

Lorenzo and Cosmo had for their disciple the famous Comte de Saint-Germain, who became notorious under Louis XV. The great alchemist was not less than a hundred

and thirty years old, the age to which some biographers say Marion Delorme attained. The Count may have heard from the Ruggieri anecdotes of the Massacre of Saint-Bartholomew and of the reigns of the Valois, in which they could at pleasure assume a part by speaking in the first person. The Comte de Saint-Germain is the last professor of alchemy who explained the science well, but he left no writings. The doctrine of the Cabala set forth in this volume was derived from that mysterious personage.

It is a strange thing! Three men's lives, that of the old man from whom this information was obtained, that of the Comte de Saint-Germain, and that of Cosmo Ruggieri, embrace European history from the reign of Francis I. to that of Napoleon. Only fifty lives of equal length would cover the time to as far back as the first known epoch of the world.— "What are fifty generations for studying the mysteries of life?" the Comte de Saint-Germain used to say.

PARIS, *November–December* 1836.

PART III

THE TWO DREAMS

In 1786 Bodard de Saint-James, treasurer to the Navy, was of all the financiers of Paris the one whose luxury gave rise to most remark and gossip. At that time he was building his famous *Folly* at Neuilly, and his wife bought, to crown the tester of her bed, a plume of feathers of which the price had dismayed the Queen. It was far easier then than now to make oneself the fashion and be talked of by all Paris; a witticism was often quite enough, or the caprice of a woman.

Bodard lived in the fine house in the Place Vendôme which the farmer-general Dangé had not long since been compelled to quit. This notorious Epicurean was lately dead; and on the day when he was buried, Monsieur de Bièvre, his intimate friend, had found matter for a jest, saying that now one could cross the Place Vendôme without danger (or Dangé). This allusion to the terrific gambling that went on in the deceased man's house was his funeral oration. The house is that opposite to the Chancellerie.

To complete Bodard's history as briefly as possible, he was a poor creature, he failed for fourteen millions of francs after the Prince de Guéménée. His clumsiness in not anticipating that Serene bankruptcy—to use an expression of Lebrun-Pindare's—led to his never even being mentioned. He died in a garret, like Bourvalais, Bouret, and many others.

Madame de Saint-James indulged an ambition of never receiving any but people of quality—a stale absurdity that is ever new. To her the cap of a lawyer in the Parlement was but a small affair; she wanted to see her rooms filled with

persons of title who had at least the minor privileges of *entrée* at Versailles. To say that many blue ribbons were to be seen in the lady's house would be untrue; but it is quite certain that she had succeeded in winning the civility and attention of some members of the Rohan family, as was proved subsequently in the too famous case of the Queen's necklace.

One evening—it was, I believe, in August 1786—I was greatly surprised to see in this millionaire's room, precise as she was in the matter of proofs of rank, two new faces, which struck me as being of decidedly inferior birth.

She came up to me as I stood in a window recess, where I had intentionally ensconced myself.

"Do tell me," said I, with a questioning glance at one of these strangers, "who is that specimen? How did he get into your house?"

"He is a charming man."

"Do you see him through the prism of love, or am I mistaken in him?"

"You are not mistaken," she replied, laughing; "he is as ugly as a toad; but he has done me the greatest service a woman can accept from a man."

As I looked at her with mischievous meaning, she hastened to add: "He has entirely cured me of the ugly red patches which spoiled my complexion and made me look like a peasant woman."

I shrugged my shoulders with disgust.

"A quack!" I exclaimed.

"No," said she, "he is a physician to the Court pages. He is clever and amusing, I assure you; and he has written books too. He is a very learned physicist."

"If his literary style is like his face!——" said I, smiling. "And the other?"

"What other?"

"That little prim man, as neat as a doll, and who looks as if he drank verjuice."

"He is a man of good family," said she. "He has come

from some province—I forget which.—Ah! yes, from Artois. He is in Paris to wind up some affair that concerns the Cardinal, and His Eminence has just introduced him to Monsieur de Saint-James. They have agreed in choosing Monsieur de Saint-James to be arbitrator. In that the gentleman from the provinces has not shown much wisdom. What are people thinking of when they place a case in that man's hands? He is as gentle as a lamb, and as shy as a girl. His Eminence is most kind to him."

"What is it about?" said I.

"Three hundred thousand livres," said she.

"What! a lawyer?" I asked, with a little start of astonishment.

"Yes," replied she.

And, somewhat disturbed by having to make this humiliating confession, Madame Bodard returned to her game of faro.

Every table was made up. I had nothing to do or to say. I had just lost two thousand crowns to Monsieur de Laval, whom I had met in a courtesan's drawing-room. I went to take a seat in a deep chair near the fire. If ever on this earth there was an astonished man, it certainly was I on discovering that my opposite neighbor was the Controller-General. Monsieur de Calonne seemed to be drowsy, or else he was absorbed in one of those brown studies which come over a statesman. When I pointed out the Minister to Beaumarchais, who came to speak to me, the creator of *Figaro* explained the mystery without speaking a word. He pointed first to my head and then to Bodard's in an ingeniously significant way, by directing his thumb to one and his little finger to the other, with the rest of the fingers closed. My first impulse was to go and say something sharp to Calonne, but I sat still; in the first place, because I intended to play the favorite a trick, and also because Beaumarchais had somewhat familiarly seized my hand.

"What is it, monsieur?" said I.

With a wink he indicated the Minister.

"Do not wake him," he said in a low tone; "we may be only too thankful when he sleeps."

"But even sleeping is a scheme of finance," said I.

"Certainly it is," replied the statesman, who had read our words by the mere motion of our lips. "And would to God we could sleep a long time; there would not be such an awakening as you will see!"

"Monseigneur," said the play-writer, "I owe you some thanks."

"What for?"

"Monsieur de Mirabeau is gone to Berlin. I do not know whether in this matter of the Waters we may not both be drowned."

"You have too much memory and too little gratitude," replied the Minister drily, vexed at this betrayal of one of his secrets before me.

"Very possibly," said Beaumarchais, greatly nettled. "But I have certain millions which may square many accounts." Calonne affected not to have heard.

It was half-past twelve before the card-tables broke up. Then we sat down to supper—ten of us: Bodard and his wife, the Controller-General, Beaumarchais, the two strangers, two pretty women whose names may not be mentioned, and a farmer-general named, I think, Lavoisier. Of thirty persons whom I had found on entering the drawing-room but these ten remained. And the two "specimens" would only stay to supper on the pressing invitation of the lady of the house, who thought she could discharge her debt to one by giving him a meal, and asked the other perhaps to please her husband, to whom she was doing the civil—wherefore I know not. Monsieur de Calonne was a power, and if any one had cause to be annoyed it would have been I.

The supper was at first deadly dull. The two men and the farmer-general weighed on us. I signed to Beaumarchais to make the son of Esculapius, by whom he was sitting, drink till he was tipsy, giving him to understand that I would deal with the lawyer. As this was the only kind of amusement open to us, and as it gave promise of some blundering impertinence on the part of the two strangers, which amused

us by anticipation, Monsieur de Calonne smiled on the scheme. In two seconds the ladies had entered into our Bacchic plot. By significant glances they expressed their readiness to play their part, and the wine of Sillery crowned our glasses again and again with silvery foam. The surgeon was easy enough to deal with; but as I was about to pour out my neighbor's second glass, he told me with the cold politeness of a money-lender that he would drink no more.

At this time, by what chance I know not, Madame de Saint-James had turned the conversation on the wonderful suppers to the Comte de Cagliostro, given by the Cardinal de Rohan. My attention was not too keenly alive to what the mistress of the house was saying; for since her reply I had watched, with invincible curiosity, my neighbor's pinched, thin face, of which the principal feature was a nose at once wide and sharp, which made him at times look very like a ferret. Suddenly his cheeks flushed as he heard Madame de Saint-James disputing with Monsieur de Calonne.

"But I assure you, monsieur," said she in a positive tone, "that I have seen Queen Cleopatra."

"I believe it, madame," said my neighbor. "I have spoken to Catherine de' Medici."

"Oh! oh!" said Monsieur de Calonne.

The words spoken by the little provincial had an indescribably sonorous tone—to use a word borrowed from physical science. This sudden clearness of enunciation, from a man who till now had spoken very little and very low, in the best possible taste, surprised us in the highest degree.

"Why, he is talking!" exclaimed the surgeon, whom Beaumarchais had worked up to a satisfactory condition.

"His neighbor must have touched a spring," replied the satirist.

Our man colored a little as he heard these words, though they were spoken in a murmur.

"And what was the late lamented Queen like?" asked Calonne.

"I will not assert that the person with whom I supped last

night was Catherine de' Medici herself; such a miracle must seem as impossible to a Christian as to a philosopher," replied the lawyer, resting his finger-tips lightly on the table, and leaning back in his chair as if preparing to speak at some length. "But, at any rate, I can swear that that woman was as like to Catherine de' Medici as though they had been sisters. The lady I saw wore a black velvet dress, absolutely like that which the Queen is wearing in the portrait belonging to the King; on her head was the characteristic black velvet cap; her complexion was colorless, and her face the face you know. I could not help expressing my surprise to His Eminence. The suddenness of the apparition was all the more wonderful because Monsieur le Comte de Cagliostro could not guess the name of the personage in whose company I wished to be. I was utterly amazed. The magical spectacle of a supper where such illustrious women of the past were the guests robbed me of my presence of mind. When, at about midnight, I got away from this scene of witchcraft, I almost doubted my own identity.

"But all these marvels seemed quite natural by comparison with the strange hallucination under which I was presently to fall. I know not what words I can use to describe the condition of my senses. But I can declare, in all sincerity of heart, that I no longer wonder that there should have been, of old, spirits weak enough—or strong enough—to believe in the mysteries of magic and the power of the Devil. For my part, till I have ampler information, I regard the apparitions of which Cardan and certain other thaumaturgists have spoken as quite possible."

These words, pronounced with incredible eloquence of tone, were of a nature to rouse extreme curiosity in those present. Our looks all centered on the orator, and we sat motionless Our eyes alone showed life as they reflected the bright wax lights in the candlesticks. By dint of watching the stranger, we fancied we could see an emanation from the pores of his face, and especially from those of his brow, of the inner feelings that wholly possessed him. This man, apparently so

cold and strictly reserved, seemed to have within him a hidden fire, of which the flame came forth to us.

"I know not," he went on, "whether the figure I had seen called up made itself invisible to follow me; but as soon as I had laid my head on my pillow, I saw the grand shade of Catherine rise before me. I instinctively felt myself in a luminous sphere; for my eyes, attracted to the Queen with painful fixity, saw her alone. Suddenly she bent over me——"

At these words the ladies with one consent betrayed keener curiosity.

"But," said the lawyer, "I do not know whether I ought to go on; although I am inclined to think that it was but a dream, what remains to be told is serious."

"Does it bear on religion?" asked Beaumarchais.

"Or is it in any way indecent?" asked Calonne. "These ladies will forgive it."

"It bears on government," replied the lawyer.

"Go on," said the Minister. "Voltaire, Diderot, and their like have done much to educate our ears."

The Controller-General was all attention, and his neighbor, Madame de Genlis, became absorbed. The stranger still hesitated. Then Beaumarchais exclaimed impetuously:

"Come, proceed, Maître! Do not you know that when the laws leave folks so little liberty, people revenge themselves by laxity of manners?"

So the lawyer went on:

"Whether it was that certain ideas were fermenting in my soul, or that I was prompted by some unknown power, I said to her:

"'Ah, madame, you committed a very great crime.'

"'Which?' she asked in a deep voice.

"'That for which the signal was given by the Palace clock on the 24th of August.'

"She smiled scornfully, and some deep furrows showed on her pallid cheeks.

"'Do you call that a crime?' replied she; 'it was only an

accident. The undertaking was badly managed, and the good result we looked for failed—for France, for all Europe, and for the Catholic Church. How could we help it? Our orders were badly carried out. We could not find so many Montlucs as we needed. Posterity will not give us credit for the defective communications which hindered us from giving our work the unity of impulse which is necessary to any great *Coup d'État;* that was our misfortune. If by the 25th of August not the shadow of a Huguenot had been left in France, I should have been regarded to the remotest posterity as a noble incarnation of Providence. How often have the clear-seeing spirits of Sixtus V., of Richelieu, of Bossuet, secretly accused me of having failed in my undertaking, after daring to conceive of it! And how many regrets attended my death!

"'The disease was still rife thirty years after that Saint-Bartholomew's night; and it had caused the shedding of ten times more noble blood in France than was left to be shed on August 26, 1572. The revocation of the Edict of Nantes, for which you had medals struck, cost more tears, more blood and money, and killed more prosperity in France than three Saint-Bartholomews. Letellier, with a dip of ink, carried into effect the decree which the Crown had secretly desired since my day; but though on August 25, 1572, this tremendous execution was necessary, on August 25, 1685, it was useless. Under Henri de Valois' second son heresy was scarcely pregnant; under Henri de Bourbon's second son the teeming mother had cast her spawn over the whole world.

"'You accuse me of crime, and you raise statues to the son of Anne of Austria! But he and I aimed at the same end. He succeeded; I failed; but Louis XIV. found the Protestants disarmed, while in my day they had powerful armies, statesmen, captains, and Germany to back them.'

"On hearing these words slowly spoken, I felt within me a tremulous thrill. I seemed to scent the blood of I know not what victims. Catherine had grown before me. She stood there like an evil genius, and I felt as if she wanted to get into my conscience to find rest there——"

"He must have dreamed that," said Beaumarchais, in a low voice. "He certainly never invented it."

"'My reason is confounded,' said I to the Queen. 'You pride yourself on an action which three generations have condemned and held accursed, and——'

"'Add,' said she, 'that writers have been more unjust to me than my contemporaries were. No one undertakes my defence. I am accused of ambition—I who was so rich and a Queen. I am taxed with cruelty—I who have but two decapitations on my conscience. And to the most impartial minds I am still, no doubt, a great riddle. Do you really believe that I was governed by feelings of hatred, that I breathed only vengeance and fury?' She smiled scornfully. 'I was as calm and cold as Reason itself. I condemned the Huguenots without pity, but without anger; they were the rotten orange in my basket. If I had been Queen of England, I should have judged the Catholics in the same way, if they had been seditious. To give our power any vitality at that period, only one God could be allowed in the State, only one faith and one master. Happily for me, I left my excuse recorded in one sentence. When Birague brought me a false report of the loss of the battle of Dreux—"Well and good," said I, "then we will go to Sermon."—Hate the leaders of the New Religion? I esteemed them highly, and I did not know them. If I ever felt an aversion for any political personage, it was for that cowardly Cardinal de Lorraine, and for his brother, a wily and brutal soldier, who had me watched by their spies. They were my children's enemies; they wanted to snatch the crown from them; I saw them every day, and they were more than I could bear. If we had not carried out the plan for Saint-Bartholomew's Day, the Guises would have done it with the help of Rome and its monks. The Ligue, which had no power till I had grown old, would have begun in 1573.'

"'But, madame,' said I, 'instead of commanding that horrible butchery—excuse my frankness—why did you not employ the vast resources of your political genius in giving the

Reformers the wise institutions which made Henri IV.'s reign so glorious and peaceful?"

"She smiled again, shrugging her shoulders, and her hollow wrinkles gave her pale features an ironical expression full of bitterness.

" 'After a furious struggle a nation needs repose,' said she. 'That is the secret of that reign. But Henri IV. committed two irremediable blunders. He ought neither to have abjured Protestantism nor to have left France Catholic after his own conversion. He alone has ever been in a position to change the face of France without a shock. Either not a single stole, or not a single conventicle! That is what he ought to have seen. To leave two hostile principles at work in a government with nothing to balance them is a crime in a King; it is sowing the seed of revolutions. It belongs to God alone to leave good and evil for ever at odds in the work of His hand. But this sentence was perhaps inscribed at the foundations of Henri IV.'s policy, and perhaps it was what led to his death. It is impossible that Sully should not have cast a covetous eye on the immense possessions of the clergy—though the clergy were not their sole masters, for the nobles dissipated at least two-thirds of the Church revenues. Sully the Reformer owned abbeys nevertheless.' She paused, to think, as it seemed.

" 'But does it occur to you,' said she, 'that you are asking a Pope's niece her reason for remaining Catholic?'—Again she paused—'And, after all, I would just as soon have been a Calvinist,' she went on, with a gesture of indifference. 'Can the superior men of your age still think that religion had really anything to do with that great trial, the most tremendous of those that Europe has been required to decide—a vast revolution retarded by trivial causes, which will not hinder it from overflowing the whole world, since I failed to stop it.—A revolution,' said she, with a look of deep meaning, 'which is still progressing, and which you may achieve.—Yes, *You,* who hear me!'

"I shuddered.

"'What! Has no one yet understood that old interests on one hand, and on the other new interests, had taken Rome and Luther to be their standards of battle! What! When Louis IX., to avoid a somewhat kindred struggle, dragged after him a population a hundred times greater than that I condemned to death, and left them in the sands of Egypt, he earned the title of Saint, while I!—But I,' she added, 'failed.'

"She looked down and stood silent for a minute. It was no longer a Queen that I beheld, but rather one of those Druidesses of old who sacrificed men, and could unroll the pages of the future while exhuming the lore of the past. But she presently raised her royal and majestic face.

"'By directing the attention of the middle classes to the abuses of the Roman Church,' said she, 'Luther and Calvin gave birth in Europe to a spirit of investigation which inevitably led the nations to examine everything. Examination leads to doubt. Instead of the faith indispensable to social existence, they brought in their train, and long after them, an inquisitive philosophy, armed with hammers, and greedy of destruction. Science, with its false lights, sprang glittering from the womb of heresy. Reform in the Church was not so much what was aimed at as the indefinite liberty of man, which is fatal to power. I have seen that. The result of the successes of the Reformers in their contest against the priesthood—even at that time better armed and more formidable than the Crown—was the destruction of the monarchical power raised with so much difficulty by Louis XI. on the ruins of feudality. Their aim was nothing less than the annihilation of Religion and Royalty, and over their wreck the middle classes of all lands were to join in a common compact. Thus this contest was war to the death between these new allies and ancient laws and beliefs. The Catholics were the representative expression of the material interests of the Crown, the Nobility, and the Priesthood.

"'It was a duel to the death between two giants; the night of Saint-Bartholomew was, unfortunately, only a wound.

Remember that, to save a few drops of blood at the right moment, a torrent had to be shed at a later day. There is a misfortune which the Intelligence that looks down on a kingdom cannot avert; that, namely, of having no peers by whom to be judged when he succumbs under the burden of events. My peers are few; fools are in the majority; these two propositions account for everything. If my name is held in execration in France, the inferior minds which constitute the mass of every generation are to blame.

"'In such great crises as I have been through, reigning does not mean holding audience, reviewing troops, and signing decrees. I may have made mistakes; I was but a woman. But why was there no man then living who was superior to the age? The Duke of Alva had a soul of iron, Philip II. was stultified by Catholic dogmas, Henri IV. was a gambler and a libertine, the Admiral was systematically pig-headed. Louis XI. had lived too soon; Richelieu came too late. Whether it were virtuous or criminal, whether the Massacre of Saint-Bartholomew is attributed to me or no, I accept the burden. I shall always stand between those two great men as a visible link in an unrecognized chain. Some day paradoxical writers will wonder whether nations have not sometimes given the name of executioner to those who, in fact, were victims. Not once only will mankind be ready to immolate a God rather than accuse itself! You are all ready to shed tears for two hundred louts, when you refuse them for the woes of a generation, of a century, of the whole world! And you also forget that political liberty, the peace of a nation, and science itself are gifts for which Fate demands a heavy tax in blood!'

"'May the nations never be happy at less cost?' cried I, with tears in my eyes.

"'Great Truths leave their wells only to find fresh vigor in baths of blood. Christianity itself, the essence of all truth, since it proceeds from God, was not established without martyrs. Has not blood flowed in torrents? Must it not for ever flow?—You will know—you who are to be one of the

builders of the social edifice founded by the apostles. As long as you use your instruments to level heads, you will be applauded; then, when you want to take up the trowel, you will be killed.'

"'Blood! blood!'—the words rang in my brain like the echo of a bell.

"'According to you,' said I, 'Protestantism has the same right as you have to argue thus?'

"But Catherine had vanished as though some draught of air had extinguished the supernatural light which enabled my mind to see the figure which had grown to gigantic proportions. I had suddenly discerned in myself an element which assimilated the horrible doctrines set forth by the Italian Queen.

"I woke in a sweat, and in tears; and at the moment when reason, triumphing within me, assured me in her mild tones that it was not the function of a King, nor even of a nation, to practise these principles, worthy only of a people of atheists——"

"And how are perishing monarchies to be saved?" asked Beaumarchais.

"God is above all, monsieur," replied my neighbor.

"Well, then," said Monsieur de Calonne, with the flippancy which characterized him, "we have always the resource of believing ourselves to be instruments in the hand of God, as the gospel according to Bossuet has it."

As soon as the ladies understood that the whole scene was a conversation between the Queen and the lawyer, they had begun whispering. Indeed, I have spared the reader the exclamations and interruptions with which they broke into the lawyer's narrative. However, such phrases as, "What a deadly bore!" and "My dear, when will he have done?" reached my ear.

When the stranger ceased speaking, the ladies were silent. Monsieur Bodard was asleep. The surgeon being half drunk, Lavoisier, Beaumarchais, and I alone had been listening; Monsieur de Calonne was playing with the lady at his side.

At this moment the silence was almost solemn. The light of the tapers seemed to me to have a magical hue. A common sentiment linked us by mysterious bonds to this man who, to me, suggested the inexplicable effects of fanaticism. It needed nothing less than the deep hollow voice of Beaumarchais' neighbor to rouse us.

"I too dreamed!" he exclaimed.

I then looked more particularly at the surgeon, and felt an indescribable sentiment of horror. His earthy complexion, his features, large but vulgar, were the exact expression of what I must be allowed to call *la canaille*, the rough mob. A few specks of dull blue and black dotted his skin like spots of mud, and his eyes flashed with sinister fires. The face looked more ominous perhaps than it really was, because a powdered wig *à la frimas* crowned his head with snow.

"That man must have buried more than one patient," said I to my neighbor.

"I would not trust my dog to his care," he replied.

"I hate him involuntarily," said I.

"I despise him," replied he.

"And yet how unjust!" cried I.

"Oh! bless me, by the day after to-morrow he may be as famous as Volange the actor," replied the stranger.

Monsieur de Calonne pointed to the surgeon with a gesture that seemed to convey, "This fellow might amuse us."

"And did you too dream of a Queen?" asked Beaumarchais.

"No, I dreamed of a people," said he with emphasis, making us laugh. "I was attending a patient whose leg I was to amputate the next day——"

"And you found a people in your patient's thigh?" asked Monsieur de Calonne.

"Exactly so!" replied the surgeon.

"Is not he amusing?" cried Madame de Genlis.

"I was greatly surprised," the speaker went on, never heeding these interruptions, and stuffing his hands into his breeches pockets, "to find some one to talk to in that leg. I had the strange power of entering into my patient. When

I first found myself in his skin, I discerned there an amazing number of tiny beings, moving, thinking, and arguing. Some lived in the man's body, and some in his mind. His ideas were creatures that were born, grew, and died; they were sick, gay, healthy, sad—and all had personal individuality They fought or fondled. A few ideas flew forth and went to dwell in the world of intellect. Suddenly I understood that there are two worlds—the visible and the invisible universe; that the earth, like man, has a body and a soul. A new light was cast on nature, and I perceived its immensity when I saw the ocean of beings everywhere distributed in masses and in species, all of one and the same living matter, from marble rocks up to God. A magnificent sight! In short, there was a universe in my patient. When I inserted my lancet in his gangrened leg, I destroyed a thousand such beings.—You laugh, ladies, at the idea that you are a prey to a thousand creatures——"

"No personalities," said Monsieur de Colonne, "speak for yourself and your patient."

"My man, horrified at the outcry of his animalcules, wanted to stop the operation; but I persisted, telling him that malignant creatures were already gnawing at his bones. He made a motion to resist me, not understanding that what I was doing was for his good, and my lancet pierced me in the side——"

"He is too stupid," said Lavoisier.

"No, he is drunk," replied Beaumarchais.

"But, gentlemen, my dream has a meaning," cried the surgeon.

"Oh, oh!" cried Bodard, waking, "my leg is asleep!"

"Your animalcules are dead," said his wife.

"That man has a vocation," said my neighbor, who had imperturbably stared at the surgeon all the time he was talking.

"It is to Monsieur's vocation what action is to speech, or the body to the soul," said the ugly guest.

But his tongue was heavy, and he got confused; he could

only utter unintelligible words. Happily, the conversation took another turn. By the end of half an hour we had forgotten the surgeon to the Court pages, and he was asleep.

When we rose from table, the rain was pouring in torrents.

"The lawyer is no fool," said I to Beaumarchais.

"Oh! he is dull and cold. But you see the provinces can still produce good folks who take political theories and the history of France quite seriously. It is a leaven that will spread."

"Have you a carriage?" Madame de Saint-James asked me.

"No," said I shortly. "I did not know that I should want it this evening. You thought, perhaps, that I should take home the Controller-General? Did he come to your house *en polisson?*" (the fashionable name at the time for a person who drove his own carriage at Marly dressed as a coachman). Madame de Saint-James left me hastily, rang the bell, ordered her husband's carriage, and took the lawyer aside.

"Monsieur de Robespierre, will you do me the favor of seeing Monsieur Marat home, for he is incapable of standing upright?" said she.

"With pleasure, madame," replied Monsieur de Robespierre with an air of gallantry; "I wish you had ordered me to do something more difficult."

PARIS, *January* 1828.

NOTE.

This is the song published by the Abbé de la Place in his collection of interesting fragments, in which may be found the dissertation alluded to. [It will be seen that it goes to the old tune of *Malbrouk s'en va-t-en guerre.*]

THE DUC DE GUISE'S BURIAL.

Qui veut ouïr chanson? (*Bis.*)
C'est du Grand Duc de Guise;
Et bon bon bon bon,
Di dan di dan don,
C'est du Grand Duc de Guise!
(This last line was spoken, no doubt, in a comic tone.)
Qui est mort et enterré.

Qui est mort et enterré. (*Bis.*)
Aux quatre coins du poêle,
Et bon bon bon bon,
Di dan di dan don,
Quatre gentilshomm's y avoit.

Quatre gentilshomm's y avoit. (*Bis.*)
L'un portoit son grand casque,
Et bon, etc.
Et l'autre ses pistolets.

Et l'autre ses pistolets. (*Bis.*)
Et l'autre son épée,
Et bon, etc.
Qui tant d'Hugu'nots a tués.

Qui tant d'Hugu'nots a tués. (*Bis.*)
Venoit le quatrième,
Et bon, etc.
Qui étoit le plus dolent.

Qui étoit le plus dolent; (*Bis.*)
Après venoient les pages,
Et bon, etc.
Et les valets de pied.

Et les valets de pied, (*Bis.*)
Avecque de grands crêpes,
Et bon, etc.
Et des souliers cirés.

Et des souliers cirés, (*Bis.*)
Et des beaux bas d'estame,
Et bon, etc.
Et des culottes de piau.

Et des culottes de piau. (*Bis.*)
La cérémonie faite,
Et bon, etc.,
Chacun s'alla coucher.

Chacun s'alla coucher: (*Bis.*)
Les uns avec leurs femmes,
Et bon, etc.
Et les autres tout seuls.

The discovery of these curious verses seems to prove, to a certain extent, the guilt of Théodore de Bèze, who tried to mitigate the horror caused by this murder by turning it to ridicule. The principal merit of this song lay, it would appear, in the tune.

GAMBARA

To Monsieur le Marquis de Belloy

It was sitting by the fire, in a mysterious and magnificent retreat, —now a thing of the past but surviving in our memory,—whence our eyes commanded a view of Paris from the heights of Bellevue to those of Belleville, from Montmartre to the triumphal Arc de l'Étoile, that one morning, refreshed by tea, amid the myriad suggestions that shoot up and die like rockets from your sparkling flow of talk, lavish of ideas, you tossed to my pen a figure worthy of Hoffmann,—that casket of unrecognized gems, that pilgrim seated at the gate of Paradise with ears to hear the songs of the angels but no longer a tongue to repeat them, playing on the ivory keys with fingers crippled by the stress of divine inspiration, believing that he is expressing celestial music to his bewildered listeners.

It was you who created Gambara; I have only clothed him. Let me render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, regretting only that you do not yourself take up the pen at a time when gentlemen ought to wield it as well as the sword, if they are to save their country. You may neglect yourself, but you owe your talents to us.

New Year's Day of 1831 was pouring out its packets of sugared almonds, four o'clock was striking, there was a mob in the Palais-Royal, and the eating-houses were beginning to fill. At this moment a coupé drew up at the *perron* and a young man stepped out; a man of haughty appearance, and no doubt a foreigner; otherwise he would not have displayed the aristocratic *chasseur* who attended him in a plumed hat, nor the coat of arms which the heroes of July still attacked.

This gentleman went into the Palais-Royal, and followed

the crowd round the galleries, unamazed at the slowness to which the throng of loungers reduced his pace; he seemed accustomed to the stately step which is ironically nicknamed the ambassador's strut; still, his dignity had a touch of the theatrical. Though his features were handsome and imposing, his hat, from beneath which thick black curls stood out, was perhaps tilted a little too much over the right ear, and belied his gravity by a too rakish effect. His eyes, inattentive and half closed, looked down disdainfully on the crowd.

"There goes a remarkably good-looking young man," said a girl in a low voice, as she made way for him to pass.

"And who is only too well aware of it!" replied her companion aloud—who was very plain.

After walking all round the arcades, the young man looked by turns at the sky and at his watch, and with a shrug of impatience went into a tobacconist's shop, lighted a cigar, and placed himself in front of a looking-glass to glance at his costume, which was rather more ornate than the rules of French taste allow. He pulled down his collar and his black velvet waistcoat, over which hung many festoons of the thick gold chain that is made at Venice; then, having arranged the folds of his cloak by a single jerk of his left shoulder, draping it gracefully so as to show the velvet lining, he started again on parade, indifferent to the glances of the vulgar.

As soon as the shops were lighted up and the dusk seemed to him black enough, he went out into the square in front of the Palais-Royal, but as a man anxious not to be recognized; for he kept close under the houses as far as the fountain, screened by the hackney-cab stand, till he reached the Rue Froid-Manteau, a dirty, poky, disreputable street—a sort of sewer tolerated by the police close to the purified purlieus of the Palais-Royal, as an Italian major-domo allows a careless servant to leave the sweepings of the rooms in a corner of the staircase.

The young man hesitated. He might have been a bedizened citizen's wife craning her neck over a gutter swollen by the

Placed himself in front of a looking glass

rain. But the hour was not unpropitious for the indulgence of some discreditable whim. Earlier, he might have been detected; later, he might find himself cut out. Tempted by a glance which is encouraging without being inviting, to have followed a young and pretty woman for an hour, or perhaps for a day, thinking of her as a divinity and excusing her light conduct by a thousand reasons to her advantage; to have allowed oneself to believe in a sudden and irresistible affinity; to have pictured, under the promptings of transient excitement, a love-adventure in an age when romances are written precisely because they never happen; to have dreamed of balconies, guitars, stratagems, and bolts, enwrapped in Almaviva's cloak; and, after inditing a poem in fancy, to stop at the door of a house of ill-fame, and, crowning all, to discern in Rosina's bashfulness a reticence imposed by the police—is not all this, I say, an experience familiar to many a man who would not own it?

The most natural feelings are those we are least willing to confess, and among them is fatuity. When the lesson is carried no further, the Parisian profits by it, or forgets it, and no great harm is done. But this would hardly be the case with this foreigner, who was beginning to think he might pay too dearly for his Paris education.

This personage was a Milanese of good family, exiled from his native country, where some "liberal" pranks had made him an object of suspicion to the Austrian Government. Count Andrea Marcosini had been welcomed in Paris with the cordiality, essentially French, that a man always finds there, when he has a pleasant wit, a sounding name, two hundred thousand francs a year, and a prepossessing person. To such a man banishment could but be a pleasure tour; his property was simply sequestrated, and his friends let him know that after an absence of two years he might return to his native land without danger.

After rhyming *crudeli affanni* with *i mici tiranni* in a dozen or so of sonnets, and maintaining as many hapless Italian refugees out of his own purse, Count Andrea, who was so

unlucky as to be a poet, thought himself released from patriotic obligations. So, ever since his arrival, he had given himself up recklessly to the pleasures of every kind which Paris offers *gratis* to those who can pay for them. His talents and his handsome person won him success among women, whom he adored collectively as beseemed his years, but among whom he had not as yet distinguished a chosen one. And indeed this taste was, in him, subordinate to those for music and poetry which he had cultivated from his childhood; and he thought success in these both more difficult and more glorious to achieve than in affairs of gallantry, since nature had not inflicted on him the obstacles men take most pride in defying.

A man, like many another, of complex nature, he was easily fascinated by the comfort of luxury, without which he could hardly have lived; and, in the same way, he clung to the social distinctions which his principles contemned. Thus his theories as an artist, a thinker, and a poet were in frequent antagonism with his tastes, his feelings, and his habits as a man of rank and wealth; but he comforted himself for his inconsistencies by recognizing them in many Parisians, like himself liberal by policy and aristocrats by nature.

Hence it was not without some uneasiness that he found himself, on December 31, 1830, under a Paris thaw, following at the heels of a woman whose dress betrayed the most abject, inveterate, and long-accustomed poverty, who was no handsomer than a hundred others to be seen any evening at the play, at the opera, in the world of fashion, and who was certainly not so young as Madame de Manerville, from whom he had obtained an assignation for that very day, and who was perhaps waiting for him at that very hour.

But in the glance at once tender and wild, swift and deep, which that woman's black eyes had shot at him by stealth, there was such a world of buried sorrows and promised joys! And she had colored so fiercely when, on coming out of a shop where she had lingered a quarter of an hour, her look frankly met the Count's, who had been waiting for her

hard by! In fact, there were so many *buts* and *ifs*, that, possessed by one of those mad temptations for which there is no word in any language, not even in that of the orgy, he had set out in pursuit of this woman, hunting her down like a hardened Parisian.

On the way, whether he kept behind or ahead of this damsel, he studied every detail of her person and her dress, hoping to dislodge the insane and ridiculous fancy that had taken up an abode in his brain; but he presently found in his examination a keener pleasure than he had felt only the day before in gazing at the perfect shape of a woman he loved, as she took her bath. Now and again, the unknown fair, bending her head, gave him a look like that of a kid tethered with its head to the ground, and finding herself still the object of his pursuit, she hurried on as if to fly. Nevertheless, each time that a block of carriages, or any other delay, brought Andrea to her side, he saw her turn away from his gaze without any signs of annoyance. These signals of restrained feelings spurred the frenzied dreams that had run away with him, and he gave them the rein as far as the Rue Froid-Manteau, down which, after many windings, the damsel vanished, thinking she had thus spoilt the scent of her pursuer, who was, in fact, startled by this move.

It was now quite dark. Two women, tattooed with rouge, who were drinking black-currant liqueur at a grocer's counter, saw the young woman and called her. She paused at the door of the shop, replied in a few soft words to the cordial greeting offered her, and went on her way. Andrea, who was behind her, saw her turn into one of the darkest yards out of this street, of which he did not know the name. The repulsive appearance of the house where the heroine of his romance had been swallowed up made him feel sick. He drew back a step to study the neighborhood, and finding an ill-looking man at his elbow, he asked him for information. The man, who held a knotted stick in his right hand, placed the left on his hip and replied in a single word:

"Scoundrel!"

But on looking at the Italian, who stood in the light of a street-lamp, he assumed a servile expression.

"I beg your pardon, sir," said he, suddenly changing his tone. "There is a restaurant near this, a sort of table-d'hôte, where the cooking is pretty bad and they serve cheese in the soup. Monsieur is in search of the place, perhaps, for it is easy to see that he is an Italian—Italians are fond of velvet and of cheese. But if monsieur would like to know of a better eating-house, an aunt of mine, who lives a few steps off, is very fond of foreigners."

Andrea raised his cloak as high as his moustache, and fled from the street, spurred by the disgust he felt at this foul person, whose clothes and manner were in harmony with the squalid house into which the fair unknown had vanished. He returned with rapture to the thousand luxuries of his own rooms, and spent the evening at the Marquise d'Espard's to cleanse himself, if possible, of the smirch left by the fancy that had driven him so relentlessly during the day.

And yet, when he was in bed, the vision came back to him, but clearer and brighter than the reality. The girl was walking in front of him; now and again as she stepped across a gutter her skirts revealed a round calf; her shapely hips swayed as she walked. Again Andrea longed to speak to her —and he dared not, he, Marcosini, a Milanese nobleman! Then he saw her turn into the dark passage where she had eluded him, and blamed himself for not having followed her.

"For, after all," said he to himself, "if she really wished to avoid me and put me off her track, it is because she loves me. With women of that stamp, coyness is a proof of love. Well, if I had carried the adventure any further, it would, perhaps, have ended in disgust. I will sleep in peace."

The Count was in the habit of analyzing his keenest sensations, as men do involuntarily when they have as much brains as heart, and he was surprised when he saw the strange damsel of the Rue Froid-Manteau once more, not in the pictured splendor of his dream but in the bare reality of dreary fact. And, in spite of it all, if fancy had stripped

the woman of her livery of misery, it would have spoilt her for him: for he wanted her, he longed for her, he loved her—with her muddy stockings, her slipshod feet, her straw bonnet! He wanted her in the very house where he had seen her go in.

"Am I bewitched by vice, then?" he asked himself in dismay. "Nay, I have not yet reached that point. I am but three-and-twenty, and there is nothing of the senile fop about me."

The very vehemence of the whim that held possession of him to some extent reassured him. This strange struggle, these reflections, and this love in pursuit may perhaps puzzle some persons who are accustomed to the ways of Paris life; but they may be reminded that Count Andrea Marcosini was not a Frenchman.

Brought up by two abbés, who, in obedience to a very pious father, had rarely let him out of their sight, Andrea had not fallen in love with a cousin at the age of eleven, or seduced his mother's maid by the time he was twelve; he had not studied at school, where a lad does not learn only, or best, the subjects prescribed by the State; he had lived in Paris but a few years, and he was still open to those sudden but deep impressions against which French education and manners are so strong a protection. In southern lands a great passion is often born of a glance. A gentleman of Gascony who had tempered strong feelings by much reflection had fortified himself by many little recipes against sudden apoplexies of taste and heart, and he advised the Count to indulge at least once a month in a wild orgy to avert those storms of the soul which, but for such precautions, are apt to break out at inappropriate moments. Andrea now remembered this advice.

"Well," thought he, "I will begin to-morrow, January 1st."

This explains why Count Andrea Marcosini hovered so shyly before turning down the Rue Froid-Manteau. The man of fashion hampered the lover, and he hesitated for some

time; but after a final appeal to his courage he went on with a firm step as far as the house, which he recognized without difficulty.

There he stopped once more. Was the woman really what he fancied her? Was he not on the verge of some false move?

At this juncture he remembered the Italian table-d'hôte, and at once jumped at a middle course, which would serve the ends alike of his curiosity and of his reputation. He went in to dine, and made his way down the passage; at the bottom, after feeling about for some time, he found a staircase with damp, slippery steps, such as to an Italian nobleman could only seem a ladder.

Invited to the first floor by the glimmer of a lamp and a strong smell of cooking, he pushed a door which stood ajar and saw a room dingy with dirt and smoke, where a wench was busy laying a table for about twenty customers. None of the guests had yet arrived.

After looking round the dimly lighted room where the paper was dropping in rags from the walls, the gentleman seated himself by a stove which was roaring and smoking in the corner.

Attracted by the noise the Count made in coming in and disposing of his cloak, the major-domo presently appeared. Picture to yourself a lean, dried-up cook, very tall, with a nose of extravagant dimensions, casting about him from time to time, with feverish keenness, a glance that he meant to be cautious. On seeing Andrea, whose attire bespoke considerable affluence, Signor Giardini bowed respectfully.

The Count expressed his intention of taking his meals as a rule in the society of some of his fellow-countrymen; he paid in advance for a certain number of tickets, and ingenuously gave the conversation a familiar bent to enable him to achieve his purpose quickly.

Hardly had he mentioned the woman he was seeking when Signor Giardini, with a grotesque shrug, looked knowingly at his customer, a bland smile on his lips.

"*Basta!*" he exclaimed. "*Capisco.* Your Excellency has

come spurred by two appetites. La Signora Gambara will not have wasted her time if she has gained the interest of a gentleman so generous as you appear to be. I can tell you in a few words all we know of the woman, who is really to be pitied.

"The husband is, I believe, a native of Cremona and has just come here from Germany. He was hoping to get the Tedeschi to try some new music and some new instruments. Isn't it pitiable?" said Giardini, shrugging his shoulders. "Signor Gambara, who thinks himself a great composer, does not seem to me very clever in other ways. An excellent fellow with sense and wit, and sometimes very agreeable, especially when he has had a few glasses of wine—which does not often happen, for he is desperately poor; night and day he toils at imaginary symphonies and operas instead of trying to earn an honest living. His poor wife is reduced to working for all sorts of people—the women on the streets! What is to be said? She loves her husband like a father, and takes care of him like a child.

"Many a young man has dined here to pay his court to madame; but not one has succeeded," said he, emphasizing the word. "La Signora Marianna is an honest woman, monsieur, much too honest, worse luck for her! Men give nothing for nothing nowadays. So the poor soul will die in harness.

"And do you suppose that her husband rewards her for her devotion? Pooh, my lord never gives her a smile! And all their cooking is done at the baker's; for not only does the wretched man never earn a sou; he spends all his wife can make on instruments which he carves, and lengthens, and shortens, and sets up and takes to pieces again till they produce sounds that would scare a cat; then he is happy. And yet you will find him the mildest, the gentlest of men. And, he is not idle; he is always at it. What is to be said? He is crazy and does not know his business. I have seen him, monsieur, filing and forging his instruments and eating black bread with an appetite that I envied him—I, who have the best table in Paris.

"Yes, Excellenza, in a quarter of an hour you shall know the man I am. I have introduced certain refinements into Italian cookery that will amaze you! Excellenza, I am a Neapolitan—that is to say, a born cook. But of what use is instinct without knowledge? Knowledge! I have spent thirty years in acquiring it, and you see where it has left me. My history is that of every man of talent. My attempts, my experiments, have ruined three restaurants in succession at Naples, Parma, and Rome. To this day, when I am reduced to make a trade of my art, I more often than not give way to my ruling passion. I give these poor refugees some of my choicest dishes. I ruin myself! Folly! you will say? I know it; but how can I help it? Genius carries me away, and I cannot resist concocting a dish which smiles on my fancy.

"And they always know it, the rascals! They know, I can promise you, whether I or my wife has stood over the fire. And what is the consequence? Of sixty-odd customers whom I used to see at my table every day when I first started in this wretched place, I now see twenty on an average, and give them credit for the most part. The Piedmontese, the Savoyards, have deserted, but the connoisseurs, the true Italians, remain. And there is no sacrifice that I would not make for them. I often give them a dinner for five and twenty sous which has cost me double."

Signor Giardini's speech had such a full flavor of Neapolitan cunning that the Count was delighted, and could have fancied himself at Gérolamo's.

"Since that is the case, my good friend," said he familiarly to the cook, "and since chance and your confidence have let me into the secret of your daily sacrifices, allow me to pay double."

As he spoke Andrea spun a forty-franc piece on the stove, out of which Giardini solemnly gave him two francs and fifty centimes in change, not without a certain ceremonious mystery that amused him hugely.

"In a few minutes now," the man added, "you will see your

Donnina. I will seat you next the husband, and if you wish to stand in his good graces, talk about music. I have invited every one for this evening, poor things. Being New Year's Day, I am treating the company to a dish in which I believe I have surpassed myself."

Signor Giardini's voice was drowned by the noisy greetings of the guests, who streamed in two and two, or one at a time, after the manner of tables-d'hôte. Giardini stayed by the Count, playing the showman by telling him who the company were. He tried by his witticisms to bring a smile to the lips of a man who, as his Neapolitan instinct told him, might be a wealthy patron to turn to good account.

"This one," said he, "is a poor composer who would like to rise from song-writing to opera, and cannot. He blames the managers, music-sellers,—everybody, in fact, but himself, and he has no worse enemy. You can see—what a florid complexion, what self-conceit, how little firmness in his features! he is made to write ballads. The man who is with him, and looks like a match-hawker, is a great musical celebrity—Gigelmi, the greatest Italian conductor known; but he has gone deaf, and is ending his days in penury, deprived of all that made it tolerable. Ah! here comes our great Ottoboni, the most guileless old fellow on earth; but he is suspected of being the most vindictive of all who are plotting for the regeneration of Italy. I cannot think how they can bear to banish such a good old man."

And here Giardini looked narrowly at the Count, who, feeling himself under inquisition as to his politics, entrenched himself in Italian impassibility.

"A man whose business it is to cook for all comers can have no political opinions, Excellenza," Giardini went on. "But to see that worthy man, who looks more like a lamb than a lion, everybody would say what I say, were it before the Austrian ambassador himself. Besides, in these times liberty is no longer proscribed; it is going its rounds again. At least, so these good people think," said he, leaning over to speak in the Count's ear, "and why should I thwart their

hopes? I, for my part, do not hate an absolute government. Excellenza, every man of talent is for despotism!

"Well, though full of genius, Ottoboni takes no end of pains to educate Italy; he writes little books to enlighten the intelligence of the children and the common people, and he smuggles them very cleverly into Italy. He takes immense trouble to reform the moral sense of our luckless country, which, after all, prefers pleasure to freedom,—and perhaps it is right."

The Count preserved such an impenetrable attitude that the cook could discover nothing of his political views.

"Ottoboni," he ran on, "is a saint; very kind-hearted; all the refugees are fond of him; for, Excellenza, a liberal may have his virtues. Oho! Here comes a journalist," said Giardini, as a man came in dressed in the absurd way which used to be attributed to a poet in a garret; his coat was threadbare, his boots split, his hat shiny, and his overcoat deplorably ancient. "Excellenza, that poor man is full of talent, and incorruptibly honest. He was born into the wrong times, for he tells the truth to everybody; no one can endure him. He writes theatrical articles for two small papers, though he is clever enough to work for the great dailies. Poor fellow!

"The rest are not worth mentioning, and Your Excellency will find them out," he concluded, seeing that on the entrance of the musician's wife the Count had ceased to listen to him.

On seeing Andrea here, Signora Marianna started visibly and a bright flush tinged her cheeks.

"Here he is!" said Giardini, in an undertone, clutching the Count's arm and nodding to a tall man. "How pale and grave he is, poor man! His hobby has not trotted to his mind to-day, I fancy."

Andrea's prepossession for Marianna was crossed by the captivating charm which Gambara could not fail to exert over every genuine artist. The composer was now forty; but although his high brow was bald and lined with a few parallel,

but not deep, wrinkles; in spite, too, of hollow temples where the blue veins showed through the smooth, transparent skin, and of the deep sockets in which his black eyes were sunk, with their large lids and light lashes, the lower part of his face made him still look young, so calm was its outline, so soft the modeling. It could be seen at a glance that in this man passion had been curbed to the advantage of the intellect; that the brain alone had grown old in some great struggle.

Andrea shot a swift look at Marianna, who was watching him. And he noted the beautiful Italian head, the exquisite proportion and rich coloring that revealed one of those organizations in which every human power is harmoniously balanced, he sounded the gulf that divided this couple, brought together by fate. Well content with the promise he inferred from this dissimilarity between the husband and wife, he made no attempt to control a liking which ought to have raised a barrier between the fair Marianna and himself. He was already conscious of feeling a sort of respectful pity for this man, whose only joy she was, as he understood the dignified and serene acceptance of ill fortune that was expressed in Gambara's mild and melancholy gaze.

After expecting to see one of the grotesque figures so often set before us by German novelists and writers of *libretti,* he beheld a simple, unpretentious man, whose manners and demeanor were in nothing strange and did not lack dignity. Without the faintest trace of luxury, his dress was more decent than might have been expected from his extreme poverty, and his linen bore witness to the tender care which watched over every detail of his existence. Andrea looked at Marianna with moistened eyes; and she did not color, but half smiled, in a way that betrayed, perhaps, some pride at this speechless homage. The Count, too thoroughly fascinated to miss the smallest indication of complaisance, fancied that she must love him, since she understood him so well.

From this moment he set himself to conquer the husband rather than the wife, turning all his batteries against the poor

Gambara, who quite guilelessly went on eating Signor Giardini's *bocconi*, without thinking of their flavor.

The Count opened the conversation on some trivial subject, but at the first words he perceived that this brain, supposed to be infatuated on one point, was remarkably clear on all others, and saw that it would be far more important to enter into this very clever man's ideas than to flatter his conceits.

The rest of the company, a hungry crew whose brain only responded to the sight of a more or less good meal, showed much animosity to the luckless Gambara, and waited only till the end of the first course, to give free vent to their satire. A refugee, whose frequent leer betrayed ambitious schemes on Marianna, and who fancied he could establish himself in her good graces by trying to make her husband ridiculous, opened fire to show the newcomer how the land lay at the table-d'hôte.

"It is a very long time since we have heard anything about the opera on 'Mahomet'!" cried he, with a smile at Marianna. "Can it be that Paolo Gambara, wholly given up to domestic cares, absorbed by the charms of the chimney-corner, is neglecting his superhuman genius, leaving his talents to get cold and his imagination to go flat?"

Gambara knew all the company; he dwelt in a sphere so far above them all that he no longer cared to repel an attack. He made no reply.

"It is not given to everybody," said the journalist, "to have an intellect that can understand Monsieur Gambara's musical efforts, and that, no doubt, is why our divine maestro hesitates to come before the worthy Parisian public."

"And yet," said the ballad-monger, who had not opened his mouth but to swallow everything that came within his reach, "I know some men of talent who think highly of the judgments of Parisian critics. I myself have a pretty reputation as a musician," he went on, with an air of diffidence. "I owe it solely to my little songs in *vaudevilles*, and the success of my dance music in drawing-rooms; but I propose ere long to bring out a mass composed for the anniversary of Bee-

thoven's death, and I expect to be better appreciated in Paris than anywhere else. You will perhaps do me the honor of hearing it?" he said, turning to Andrea.

"Thank you," said the Count. "But I do not conceive that I am gifted with the organs needful for the appreciation of French music. If you were dead, monsieur, and Beethoven had composed the mass, I would not have failed to attend the performance."

This retort put an end to the tactics of those who wanted to set Gambara off on his high horse to amuse the new guest. Andrea was already conscious of an unwillingness to expose so noble and pathetic a mania as a spectacle for so much vulgar shrewdness. It was with no base reservation that he kept up a desultory conversation, in the course of which Signor Giardini's nose not infrequently interposed between two remarks. Whenever Gambara uttered some elegant repartee or some paradoxical aphorism, the cook put his head forward, to glance with pity at the musician and with meaning at the Count, muttering in his ear, *"E matto!"*

Then came a moment when the *chef* interrupted the flow of his judicial observations to devote himself to the second course, which he considered highly important. During his absence, which was brief, Gambara leaned across to address Andrea.

"Our worthy host," said he, in an undertone, "threatens to regale us to-day with a dish of his own concocting, which I recommend you to avoid, though his wife has had an eye on him. The good man has a mania for innovations. He ruined himself by experiments, the last of which compelled him to fly from Rome without a passport—a circumstance he does not talk about. After purchasing the good-will of a popular restaurant he was trusted to prepare a banquet given by a lately made Cardinal, whose household was not yet complete. Giardini fancied he had an opportunity for distinguishing himself—and he succeeded! for that same evening he was accused of trying to poison the whole conclave, and was obliged to leave Rome and Italy without waiting to pack up.

This disaster was the last straw. Now," and Gambara put his finger to his forehead and shook his head.

"He is a good fellow, all the same," he added. "My wife will tell you that we owe him many a good turn."

Giardini now came in carefully bearing a dish which he set in the middle of the table, and he then modestly resumed his seat next to Andrea, whom he served first. As soon as he had tasted the mess, the Count felt that an impassable gulf divided the second mouthful from the first. He was much embarrassed, and very anxious not to annoy the cook, who was watching him narrowly. Though a French *restaurateur* may care little about seeing a dish scorned if he is sure of being paid for it, it is not so with an Italian, who is not often satiated with praises.

To gain time, Andrea complimented Giardini enthusiastically, but he leaned over to whisper in his ear, and slipping a gold piece into his hand under the table, begged him to go out and buy a few bottles of champagne, leaving him free to take all the credit of the treat.

When the Italian returned, every plate was cleared, and the room rang with praises of the master-cook. The champagne soon mounted these southern brains, and the conversation, till now subdued in the stranger's presence, overleaped the limits of suspicious reserve to wander far over the wide fields of political and artistic opinions.

Andrea, to whom no form of intoxication was known but those of love and poetry, had soon gained the attention of the company and skilfully led it to a discussion of matters musical.

"Will you tell me, monsieur," said he to the composer of dance-music, "how it is that the Napoleon of these tunes can condescend to usurp the place of Palestrina, Pergolesi and Mozart,—poor creatures who must pack and vanish at the advent of that tremendous Mass for the Dead?"

"Well, monsieur," replied the composer, "a musician always finds it difficult to reply when the answer needs the co-operation of a hundred skilled executants. Mozart, Haydn,

and Beethoven, without an orchestra, would be of no great account."

"Of no great account!" said Marcosini. "Why, all the world knows that the immortal author of *Don Giovanni* and the *Requiem* was named Mozart; and I am so unhappy as not to know the name of the inexhaustible writer of quadrilles which are so popular in our drawing-rooms——"

"Music exists independently of execution," said the retired conductor, who, in spite of his deafness, had caught a few words of the conversation. "As he looks through the C-minor symphony by Beethoven, a musician is transported to the world of fancy on the golden wings of the subject in G-natural repeated by the horns in E. He sees a whole realm, by turns glorious in dazzling shafts of light, gloomy under clouds of melancholy, and cheered by heavenly strains."

"The new school has left Beethoven far behind," said the ballad-writer, scornfully.

"Beethoven is not yet understood," said the Count. "How can he be excelled?"

Gambara drank a large glass of champagne, accompanying the draught by a covert smile of approval.

"Beethoven," the Count went on, "extended the limits of instrumental music, and no one has followed in his track."

Gambara assented with a nod.

"His work is especially noteworthy for simplicity of construction and for the way the scheme is worked out," the Count went on. "Most composers make use of the orchestral parts in a vague, incoherent way, combining them for a merely temporary effect; they do not persistently contribute to the whole mass of the movement by their steady and regular progress. Beethoven assigns its part to each tone-quality from the first. Like the various companies which, by their disciplined movements, contribute to winning a battle, the orchestral parts of a symphony by Beethoven obey the plan ordered for the interest of all, and are subordinate to an admirably conceived scheme.

"In this he may be compared to a genius of a different

type. In Walter Scott's splendid historical novels, some personage, who seems to have least to do with the action of the story, intervenes at a given moment and leads up to the climax by some thread woven into the plot."

"E vero!" remarked Gambara, to whom common sense seemed to return in inverse proportion to sobriety.

Andrea, eager to carry the test further, for a moment forgot all his predilections; he proceeded to attack the European fame of Rossini, disputing the position which the Italian school has taken by storm, night after night for more than thirty years, on a hundred stages in Europe. He had undertaken a hard task. The first words he spoke raised a strong murmur of disapproval; but neither repeated interruptions, nor exclamations, nor frowns, nor contemptuous looks, could check this determined advocate of Beethoven.

"Compare," said he, "that sublime composer's works with what by common consent is called Italian music. What feebleness of ideas, what limpness of style! That monotony of form, those commonplace cadenzas, those endless bravura passages introduced at haphazard irrespective of the dramatic situation, that recurrent *crescendo* that Rossini brought into vogue, are now an integral part of every composition; those vocal fireworks result in a sort of babbling, chattering, vaporous music, of which the sole merit depends on the greater or less fluency of the singer and his rapidity of vocalization.

"The Italian school has lost sight of the high mission of art. Instead of elevating the crowd, it has condescended to the crowd; it has won its success only by accepting the suffrages of all comers, and appealing to the vulgar minds which constitute the majority. Such a success is mere street juggling.

"In short, the compositions of Rossini, in whom this music is personified, with those of the writers who are more or less of his school, to me seem worthy at best to collect a crowd in the street round a grinding organ, as an accompaniment to the capers of a puppet show. I even prefer French music,

and I can say no more. Long live German music!" cried he, "when it is tuneful," he added in a low voice.

This sally was the upshot of a long preliminary discussion, in which, for more than a quarter of an hour, Andrea had divagated in the upper sphere of metaphysics, with the ease of a somnambulist walking over the roofs.

Gambara, keenly interested in all this transcendentalism, had not lost a word; he took up his parable as soon as Andrea seemed to have ended, and a little stir of revived attention was evident among the guests, of whom several had been about to leave.

"You attack the Italian school with much vigor," said Gambara, somewhat warmed to his work by the champagne, "and, for my part, you are very welcome. I, thank God, stand outside this more or less melodic frippery. Still, as a man of the world, you are too ungrateful to the classic land whence Germany and France derived their first teaching. While the compositions of Carissimi, Cavalli, Scarlatti, and Rossi were being played throughout Italy, the violin players of the Paris opera house enjoyed the singular privilege of being allowed to play in gloves. Lulli, who extended the realm of harmony, and was the first to classify discords, on arriving in France found but two men—a cook and a mason—whose voice and intelligence were equal to performing his music; he made a tenor of the former, and transformed the latter into a bass. At that time Germany had no musician excepting Sebastian Bach.—But you, monsieur, though you are so young," Gambara added, in the humble tone of a man who expects to find his remarks received with scorn or ill-nature, "must have given much time to the study of these high matters of art; you could not otherwise explain them so clearly."

This word made many of the hearers smile, for they had understood nothing of the fine distinctions drawn by Andrea. Giardini, indeed, convinced that the Count had been talking mere rhodomontade, nudged him with a laugh in his sleeve, as at a good joke in which he flattered himself that he was a partner.

"There is a great deal that strikes me as very true in all you have said," Gambara went on; "but be careful. Your argument, while reflecting on Italian sensuality, seems to me to lean towards German idealism, which is a no less fatal heresy. If men of imagination and good sense, like you, desert one camp only to join the other; if they cannot keep to the happy medium between two forms of extravagance, we shall always be exposed to the satire of the sophists, who deny all progress, who compare the genius of man to this table-cloth, which, being too short to cover the whole of Signor Giardini's table, decks one end at the expense of the other."

Giardini bounded in his seat as if he had been stung by a horse-fly, but swift reflection restored him to his dignity as a host; he looked up to heaven and again nudged the Count, who was beginning to think the cook more crazy than Gambara.

This serious and pious way of speaking of art interested the Milanese extremely. Seated between these two distracted brains, one so noble and the other so common, and making game of each other to the great entertainment of the crowd, there was a moment when the Count found himself wavering between the sublime and its parody, the farcical extremes of human life. Ignoring the chain of incredible events which had brought them to this smoky den, he believed himself to be the plaything of some strange hallucination, and thought of Gambara and Giardini as two abstractions.

Meanwhile, after a last piece of buffoonery from the deaf conductor in reply to Gambara, the company had broken up laughing loudly. Giardini went off to make coffee, which he begged the select few to accept, and his wife cleared the table. The Count, sitting near the stove between Marianna and Gambara, was in the very position which the mad musician thought most desirable, with sensuousness on one side and idealism on the other. Gambara finding himself for the first time in the society of a man who did not laugh at him to his face, soon diverged from generalities to talk of himself, of his life, his work, and the musical regeneration of which he believed himself to be the Messiah.

"Listen," said he, "you who so far have not insulted me. I will tell you the story of my life; not to make a boast of my perseverance, which is no virtue of mine, but to the greater glory of Him who has given me His strength. You seem kind and pious; if you do not believe in me at least you will pity me. Pity is human; faith comes from God."

Andrea turned and drew back under his chair the foot that had been seeking that of the fair Marianna, fixing his eyes on her while listening to Gambara.

"I was born at Cremona, the son of an instrument maker, a fairly good performer and an even better composer," the musician began. "Thus at an early age I had mastered the laws of musical construction in its twofold aspects, the material and the spiritual; and as an inquisitive child I observed many things which subsequently recurred to the mind of the full-grown man.

"The French turned us out of our own home—my father and me. We were ruined by the war. Thus, at the age of ten I entered on the wandering life to which most men have been condemned whose brains were busy with innovations, whether in art, science, or politics. Fate, or the instincts of their mind which cannot fit into the compartments where the trading class sit, providentially guides them to the spots where they may find teaching. Led by my passion for music I wandered throughout Italy from theatre to theatre, living on very little, as men can live there. Sometimes I played the bass in an orchestra, sometimes I was on the boards in the chorus, sometimes under them with the carpenters. Thus I learned every kind of musical effect, studying the tones of instruments and of the human voice, wherein they differed and how they harmonized, listening to the score and applying the rules taught me by my father.

"It was hungry work, in a land where the sun always shines, where art is all pervading, but where there is no pay for the artist, since Rome is but nominally the Sovereign of the Christian world. Sometimes made welcome, sometimes

scouted for my poverty, I never lost courage. I heard a voice within me promising me fame.

"Music seemed to me in its infancy, and I think so still. All that is left to us of musical effort before the seventeenth century, proves to me that early musicians knew melody only; they were ignorant of harmony and its immense resources. Music is at once a science and an art. It is rooted in physics and mathematics, hence it is a science; inspiration makes it an art, unconsciously utilizing the theorems of science. It is founded in physics by the very nature of the matter it works on. Sound is air in motion. The air is formed of constituents which, in us, no doubt, meet with analogous elements that respond to them, sympathize, and magnify them by the power of the mind. Thus the air must include a vast variety of molecules of various degrees of elasticity, and capable of vibrating in as many different periods as there are tones from all kinds of sonorous bodies; and these molecules, set in motion by the musician and falling on our ear, answer to our ideas, according to each man's temperament. I myself believe that sound is identical in its nature with light. Sound is light, perceived under another form; each acts through vibrations to which man is sensitive and which he transforms, in the nervous centres, into ideas.

"Music, like painting, makes use of materials which have the property of liberating this or that property from the surrounding medium and so suggesting an image. The instruments in music perform this part, as color does in painting. And whereas each sound produced by a sonorous body is invariably allied with its major third and fifth, whereas it acts on grains of fine sand lying on stretched parchment so as to distribute them in geometrical figures that are always the same, according to the pitch,—quite regular when the combination is a true chord, and indefinite when the sounds are dissonant,—I say that music is an art conceived in the very bowels of nature.

"Music is subject to physical and mathematical laws. Physical laws are but little known, mathematics are well un-

derstood; and it is since their relations have been studied, that the harmony has been created to which we owe the works of Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, and Rossini, grand geniuses, whose music is undoubtedly nearer to perfection than that of their precursors, though their genius, too, is unquestionable. The old masters could sing, but they had not art and science at their command,—a noble alliance which enables us to merge into one the finest melody and the power of harmony.

"Now, if a knowledge of mathematical laws gave us these four great musicians, what may we not attain to if we can discover the physical laws in virtue of which—grasp this clearly—we may collect, in larger or smaller quantities, according to the proportions we may require, an ethereal substance diffused in the atmosphere which is the medium alike of music and of light, of the phenomena of vegetation and of animal life! Do you follow me? Those new laws would arm the composer with new powers by supplying him with instruments superior to those now in use, and perhaps with a potency of harmony immense as compared with that now at his command. If every modified shade of sound answers to a force, that must be known to enable us to combine all these forces in accordance with their true laws.

"Composers work with substances of which they know nothing. Why should a brass and a wooden instrument—a bassoon and horn—have so little identity of tone, when they act on the same matter, the constituent gases of the air? Their differences proceed from some displacement of those constituents, from the way they act on the elements which are their affinity and which they return, modified by some occult and unknown process. If we knew what the process was, science and art would both be the gainers. Whatever extends science enhances art.

"Well, these are the discoveries I have guessed and made. Yes," said Gambara, with increasing vehemence, "hitherto men have noted effects rather than causes. If they could but master the causes, music would be the greatest of the arts.

Is it not the one which strikes deepest to the soul? You see in painting no more than it shows you; in poetry you have only what the poet says; music goes far beyond this. Does it not form your taste, and rouse dormant memories? In a concert-room there may be a thousand souls; a strain is flung out from Pasta's throat, the execution worthily answering to the ideas that flashed through Rossini's mind as he wrote the air. That phrase of Rossini's, transmitted to those attentive souls, is worked out in so many different poems. To one it presents a woman long dreamed of; to another, some distant shore where he wandered long ago. It rises up before him with its drooping willows, its clear waters, and the hopes that then played under its leafy arbors. One woman is reminded of the myriad feelings that tortured her during an hour of jealousy, while another thinks of the unsatisfied cravings of her heart, and paints in the glowing hues of a dream an ideal lover, to whom she abandons herself with the rapture of the woman in the Roman mosaic who embraces a chimera: yet a third is thinking that this very evening some hoped-for joy is to be hers, and rushes by anticipation into the tide of happiness, its dashing waves breaking against her burning bosom. Music alone has this power of throwing us back on ourselves; the other arts give us infinite pleasure. But I am digressing.

"These were my first ideas, vague indeed: for an inventor at the beginning only catches glimpses of the dawn, as it were. So I kept these glorious ideas at the bottom of my knapsack, and they gave me spirit to eat the dry crust I often dipped in the water of a spring. I worked, I composed airs, and, after playing them on any instrument that came to hand, I went off again on foot across Italy. Finally, at the age of two-and-twenty, I settled in Venice, where for the first time I enjoyed rest and found myself in a decent position. I there made the acquaintance of a Venetian nobleman who liked my ideas, who encouraged me in my investigations, and who got me employment at the Venice theatre.

"Living was cheap, lodging inexpensive. I had a room in

that Capello palace from which the famous Bianca came forth one evening to become a Grand Duchess of Tuscany. And I would dream that my unrecognized fame would also emerge from thence one day to be crowned.

"I spent my evenings at the theatre and my days in work. Then came disaster. The performance of an opera in which I had experimented, trying my music, was a failure. No one understood my score for the *Martiri.* Set Beethoven before the Italians and they are out of their depth. No one had patience enough to wait for the effect to be produced by the different motives given out by each instrument, which were all at last to combine in a grand *ensemble.*

"I had built some hopes on the success of the *Martiri,* for we votaries of the blue divinity Hope always discount results. When a man believes himself destined to do great things, it is hard not to fancy them achieved; the bushel always has some cracks through which the light shines.

"My wife's family lodged in the same house, and the hope of winning Marianna, who often smiled at me from her window, had done much to encourage my efforts. I now fell into the deepest melancholy as I sounded the depths of the gulf I had dropped into; for I foresaw plainly a life of poverty, a perpetual struggle in which love must die. Marianna acted as genius does; she jumped across every obstacle, both feet at once. I will not speak of the little happiness which shed its gilding on the beginning of my misfortunes. Dismayed at my failure, I decided that Italy was not intelligent enough, and too much sunk in the dull round of routine to accept the innovations I conceived of; so I thought of going to Germany.

"I traveled thither by way of Hungary, listening to the myriad voices of nature, and trying to reproduce that sublime harmony by the help of instruments which I constructed or altered for the purpose. These experiments involved me in vast expenses which had soon exhausted my savings. And yet those were our golden days. In Germany I was appreciated. There has been nothing in my life more glorious than that time. I can think of nothing to compare with the vehe-

ment joys I found by the side of Marianna, whose beauty was then of really heavenly radiance and splendor. In short, I was happy.

"During that period of weakness I more than once expressed my passion in the language of earthly harmony. I even wrote some of those airs, just like geometrical patterns, which are so much admired in the world of fashion that you move in. But as soon as I made a little way I met with insuperable obstacles raised by my rivals, all hypercritical or unappreciative.

"I had heard of France as being a country where novelties were favorably received, and I wanted to get there; my wife had a little money and we came to Paris. Till then no one had actually laughed in my face; but in this dreadful city I had to endure that new form of torture, to which abject poverty ere long added its bitter sufferings. Reduced to lodging in this mephitic quarter, for many months we have lived exclusively on Marianna's sewing, she having found employment for her needle in working for the unhappy prostitutes who make this street their hunting ground. Marianna assures me that among those poor creatures she has met with such consideration and generosity as I, for my part, ascribe to the ascendency of virtue so pure that even vice is compelled to respect it."

"Hope on," said Andrea. "Perhaps you have reached the end of your trials. And while waiting for the time when my endeavor, seconding yours, shall set your labors in a true light, allow me, as a fellow-countryman and an artist like yourself, to offer you some little advance on the undoubted success of your score."

"All that has to do with matters of material existence I leave to my wife," replied Gambara. "She will decide as to what we may accept without a blush from so thorough a gentleman as you seem to be. For my part,—and it is long since I have allowed myself to indulge such full confidences,—I must now ask you to allow me to leave you. I see a melody beckoning to me, dancing and floating before me,

bare and quivering, like a girl entreating her lover for her clothes which he has hidden. Good-night. I must go and dress my mistress. My wife I leave with you."

He hurried away, as a man who blames himself for the loss of valuable time; and Marianna, somewhat embarrassed, prepared to follow him.

Andrea dared not detain her.

Giardini came to the rescue.

"But you heard, signora," said he. "Your husband has left you to settle some little matters with the Signor Conte."

Marianna sat down again, but without raising her eyes to Andrea, who hesitated before speaking.

"And will not Signor Gambara's confidence entitle me to his wife's?" he said in agitated tones. "Can the fair Marianna refuse to tell me the story of her life?"

"My life!" said Marianna. "It is the life of the ivy. If you wish to know the story of my heart, you must suppose me equally destitute of pride and of modesty if you can ask me to tell it after what you have just heard."

"Of whom, then, can I ask it?" cried the Count, in whom passion was blinding his wits.

"Of yourself," replied Marianna. "Either you understand me by this time, or you never will. Try to ask yourself."

"I will, but you must listen. And this hand, which I am holding, is to lie in mine as long as my narrative is truthful."

"I am listening," said Marianna.

"A woman's life begins with her first passion," said Andrea. "And my dear Marianna began to live only on the day when she first saw Paolo Gambara. She needed some deep passion to feed upon, and, above all, some interesting weakness to shelter and uphold. The beautiful woman's nature with which she is endowed is perhaps not so truly passion as maternal love.

"You sigh, Marianna? I have touched one of the aching wounds in your heart. It was a noble part for you to play, so young as you were,—that of protectress to a noble but wandering intellect. You said to yourself: 'Paolo will be my

genius; I shall be his common sense; between us we shall be that almost divine being called an angel,—the sublime creature that enjoys and understands, reason never stifling love.'

"And then, in the first impetus of youth, you heard the thousand voices of nature which the poet longed to reproduce. Enthusiasm clutched you when Paolo spread before you the treasures of poetry, while seeking to embody them in the sublime but restricted language of music; you admired him when delirious rapture carried him up and away from you, for you liked to believe that all this devious energy would at last come down and alight as love. But you knew not the tyrannous and jealous despotism of the ideal over the minds that fall in love with it. Gambara, before meeting you, had given himself over to the haughty and overbearing mistress, with whom you have struggled for him to this day.

"Once, for an instant, you had a vision of happiness. Paolo, tumbling from the lofty sphere where his spirit was constantly soaring, was amazed to find reality so sweet; you fancied that his madness would be lulled in the arms of love. But before long Music again clutched her prey. The dazzling mirage which had cheated you into the joys of reciprocal love made the lonely path on which you had started look more desolate and barren.

"In the tale your husband has just told me, I could read, as plainly as in the contrast between your looks and his, all the painful secrets of that ill-assorted union, in which you have accepted the sufferer's part. Though your conduct has been unfailingly heroical, though your firmness has never once given way in the exercise of your painful duties, perhaps, in the silence of lonely nights, the heart that at this moment is beating so wildly in your breast, may, from time to time, have rebelled. Your husband's superiority was in itself your worst torment. If he had been less noble, less single-minded, you might have deserted him; but his virtues upheld yours; you wondered, perhaps, whether his heroism or your own would be the first to give way.

"You clung to your really magnanimous task as Paolo clung to his chimera. If you had had nothing but a devotion to duty to guide and sustain you, triumph might have seemed easier; you would only have had to crush your heart, and transfer your life into the world of abstractions; religion would have absorbed all else, and you would have lived for an idea, like those saintly women who kill all the instincts of nature at the foot of the altar. But the all-pervading charm of Paolo, the loftiness of his mind, his rare and touching proofs of tenderness, constantly drag you down from that ideal realm where virtue would fain maintain you; they perennially revive in you the energies you have exhausted in contending with the phantom of love. You never suspected this! The faintest glimmer of hope led you on in pursuit of the sweet vision.

"At last the disappointments of many years have undermined your patience,—an angel would have lost it long since,—and now the apparition so long pursued is no more than a shade without substance. Madness that is so nearly allied to genius can know no cure in this world. When this thought first struck you, you looked back on your past youth, sacrificed, if not wasted; you then bitterly discerned the blunder of nature that had given you a father when you looked for a husband. You asked yourself whether you had not gone beyond the duty of a wife in keeping yourself wholly for a man who was bound up in his science. Marianna, leave your hand in mine; all I have said is true. And you looked about you—but now you were in Paris, not in Italy, where men know how to love——"

"Oh! Let me finish the tale," cried Marianna. "I would rather say things myself. I will be honest; I feel that I am speaking to my truest friend. Yes, I was in Paris when all you have expressed so clearly took place in my mind; but when I saw you I was saved, for I had never met with the love I had dreamed of from my childhood. My poor dress and my dwelling-place had hidden me from the eyes of men of your class. A few young men, whose position did

not allow of their insulting me, were all the more intolerable for the levity with which they treated me. Some made game of my husband, as if he were merely a ridiculous old man; others basely tried to win his good graces to betray me; one and all talked of getting me away from him, and none understood the devotion I feel for a soul that is so far away from us only because it is so near heaven, for that friend, that brother, whose handmaid I will always be.

"You alone understood, did you not? the tie that binds me to him. Tell me that you feel a sincere and disinterested regard for my Paolo——"

"I gladly accept your praises," Andrea interrupted; "but go no further; do not compel me to contradict you. I love you, Marianna, as we love in the beautiful country where we both were born. I love you with all my soul and with all my strength; but before offering you that love, I will be worthy of yours. I will make a last attempt to give back to you the man you have loved so long and will love forever. Till success or defeat is certain, accept without any shame the modest case I can give you both. We will go to-morrow and choose a place where he may live.

"Have you such regard for me as will allow you to make me the partner in your guardianship?"

Marianna, surprised at such magnanimity, held out her hand to the Count, who went away, trying to evade the civilities of Giardini and his wife.

On the following day Giardini took the Count up to the room where the Gambaras lodged. Though Marianna fully knew her lover's noble soul,—for there are natures which quickly enter into each other's spirit,—Marianna was too good a housewife not to betray her annoyance at receiving such a fine gentleman in so humble a room. Everything was exquisitely clean. She had spent the morning in dusting her motley furniture, the handiwork of Signor Giardini, who had put it together, at odd moments of leisure, out of the fragments of the instruments rejected by Gambara.

Andrea had never seen anything quite so crazy. To keep a decent countenance he turned away from a grotesque bed, contrived by the ingenious cook in the case of an old harpsichord, and looked at Marianna's narrow couch, of which the single mattress was covered with a white muslin counterpane, a circumstance that gave rise in his mind to some sad but sweet thoughts.

He wished to speak of his plans and of his morning's work; but Gambara, in his enthusiasm, believing that he had at last met with a willing listener, took possession of him, and compelled him to listen to the opera he had written for Paris.

"In the first place, monsieur," said the composer, "allow me to explain the subject in a few words. Here, the hearers receiving a musical impression do not work it out in themselves, as religion bids us work out the texts of Scripture in prayer. Hence it is very difficult to make them understand that there is in nature an eternal melody, exquisitely sweet, a perfect harmony, disturbed only by revolutions independent of the divine will, as passions are uncontrolled by the will of men.

"I, therefore, had to seek a vast framework in which effect and cause might both be included; for the aim of my music is to give a picture of the life of nations from the loftiest point of view. My opera, for which I myself wrote the *libretto*, for a poet would never have fully developed the subject, is the life of Mahomet,—a figure in whom the magic of Sabæanism combined with the Oriental poetry of the Hebrew Scriptures to result in one of the greatest human epics, the Arab dominion. Mahomet certainly derived from the Hebrews the idea of a despotic government, and from the religion of the shepherd tribes or Sabæans the spirit of expansion which created the splendid empire of the Khalifs. His destiny was stamped on him in his birth, for his father was a heathen and his mother a Jewess. Ah! my dear Count, to be a great musician a man must be very learned. Without knowledge he can get no local color and put no ideas into his music. The composer who sings for singing's sake is an artisan, not an artist.

"This magnificent opera is the continuation of the great work I projected. My first opera was called *The Martyrs,* and I intend to write a third on Jerusalem delivered. You perceive the beauty of this trilogy and what a variety of motives it offers,—the Martyrs, Mahomet, the Deliverance of Jerusalem: the God of the West, the God of the East, and the struggle of their worshipers over a tomb. But we will not dwell on my fame, now for ever lost.

"This is the argument of my opera." He paused. "The first act," he went on, "shows Mahomet as a porter to Kadijah, a rich widow with whom his uncle placed him. He is in love and ambitious. Driven from Mecca, he escapes to Medina, and dates his era from his flight, the *Hegira.* In the second act he is a Prophet, founding a militant religion. In the third, disgusted with all things, having exhausted life, Mahomet conceals the manner of his death in the hope of being regarded as a god,—last effort of human pride.

"Now you shall judge of my way of expressing in sound a great idea, for which poetry could find no adequate expression in words."

Gambara sat down to the piano with an absorbed gaze, and his wife brought him the mass of papers forming his score, but he did not open them.

"The whole opera," said he, "is founded on a bass, as on a fruitful soil. Mahomet was to have a majestic bass voice, and his wife necessarily had a contralto. Kadijah was quite old—twenty! Attention! This is the overture. It begins with an *andante* in C major, triple time. Do you hear the sadness of the ambitious man who is not satisfied with love? Then, through his lamentation, by a transition to the key of E flat, *allegro,* common time, we hear the cries of the epileptic lover, his fury and certain warlike phrases, for the mighty scimitar of the Khalifs begins to gleam before him. The charms of the one and only woman give him the impulse to multiplied loves which strikes us in *Don Giovanni.* Now, as you hear these themes, do you not catch a glimpse of Mahomet's Paradise?

"And next we have a *cantabile* (A flat major, six-eight time), that might expand the soul that is least susceptible to music. Kadijah has understood Mahomet! Then Kadijah announces to the populace the Prophet's interviews with the Angel Gabriel (*maestoso sostenuto* in F major). The magistrates and priests, power and religion, feeling themselves attacked by the innovator, as Christ and Socrates also attacked effete or worn-out powers and religions, persecute Mahomet and drive him out of Mecca (*stretto* in C major). Then comes my beautiful dominant (G major, common time). Arabia now harkens to the Prophet; horsemen arrive (G major, E flat, B flat, G minor, and still common time). The mass of men gathers like an avalanche; the false Prophet has begun on a tribe the work he will achieve over a world (G major).

"He promises the Arabs universal dominion, and they believe him because he is inspired. The *crescendo* beings (still in the dominant). Here come some flourishes (in C major) from the brass, founded on the harmony, but strongly marked, and asserting themselves as an expression of the first triumphs. Medina has gone over to the Prophet, and the whole army marches on Mecca (an explosion of sound in C major). The whole power of the orchestra is worked up like a conflagration; every instrument is employed; it is a torrent of harmony.

"Suddenly the *tutti* is interrupted by a flowing air (on the minor third). You hear the last strain of devoted love. The woman who had upheld the great man dies concealing her despair, dies at the moment of triumph for him in whom love has become too overbearing to be content with one woman; and she worships him enough to sacrifice herself to the greatness of the man who is killing her. What a blaze of love!

"Then the Desert rises to overrun the world (back to C major). The whole strength of the orchestra comes in again, collected in a tremendous quintet grounded on the fundamental bass.—and he is dying! Mahomet is world-weary;

he has exhausted everything. Now he craves to die a god. Arabia, in fact, worships and prays to him, and we return to the first melancholy strain (C minor) to which the curtain rose.

"Now, do you not discern," said Gambara, ceasing to play, and turning to the Count, "in this picturesque and vivid music—abrupt, grotesque, or melancholy, but always grand —the complete expression of the life of an epileptic, mad for enjoyment, unable to read or write, using all his defects as stepping-stones, turning every blunder and disaster into a triumph? Did not you feel a sense of his fascination exerted over a greedy and lustful race, in this overture, which is an epitome of the opera?"

At first calm and stern, the maestro's face, in which Andrea had been trying to read the ideas he was uttering in inspired tones, though the chaotic flood of notes afforded no clue to them, had by degrees glowed with fire and assumed an impassioned force that infected Marianna and the cook. Marianna, too, deeply affected by certain passages in which she recognized a picture of her own position, could not conceal the expression of her eyes from Andrea.

Gambara wiped his brow, and shot a glance at the ceiling of such fierce energy that he seemed to pierce it and soar to the very skies.

"You have seen the vestibule," said he; "we will now enter the palace. The opera begins:—

"Act I. Mahomet, alone on the stage, begins with an air (F natural, common time), interrupted by a chorus of camel-drivers gathered round a well at the back of the stage (they sing in contrary time—twelve-eight). What majestic woe! It will appeal to the most frivolous women, piercing to their inmost nerves if they have no heart. Is not this the very expression of crushed genius?"

To Andrea's great astonishment,—for Marianna was accustomed to it,—Gambara contracted his larynx to such a pitch that the only sound was a stifled cry not unlike the bark of a watch-dog that has lost its voice. A slight foam came to the composer's lips and made Andrea shudder.

"His wife appears (A minor). Such a magnificent duet! In this number I have shown that Mahomet has the will and his wife the brains. Kadijah announces that she is about to devote herself to an enterprise that will rob her of her young husband's love. Mahomet means to conquer the world; this his wife has guessed, and she supports him by persuading the people of Mecca that her husband's attacks of epilepsy are the effect of his intercourse with the angels (chorus of the first followers of Mahomet, who come to promise him their aid. C sharp minor, *sotto voce*). Mahomet goes off to seek the Angel Gabriel (*recitative* in F major). His wife encourages the disciples (*aria*, interrupted by the chorus; gusts of chanting support Kadijah's broad and majestic air, A major).

"Abdallah, the father of Ayesha,—the only maiden Mahomet had found really innocent, wherefore he changed the name of Abdallah to Abubekir (the father of the virgin),—comes forward with Ayesha and sings against the chorus, in strains which rise above the other voices and supplement the air sung by Kadijah in contrapuntal treatment. Omar, the father of another maiden who is to be Mahomet's concubine, follows Abubekir's example; he and his daughter join in to form a quintette. The girl Ayesha is first soprano, Hafsa second soprano; Abubekir is a bass, Omar a baritone.

"Mahomet returns, inspired. He sings his first *bravura* air, the beginning of the *finale* (E major), promising the empire of the world to those who believe in him. The Prophet, seeing the two damsels, then, by a gentle transition (from B major to G major), addresses them in amorous tones. Ali, Mahomet's cousin, and Khaled, his greatest general, both tenors, now arrive and announce the persecution; the magistrates, the military, and the authorities have all proscribed the Prophet (*recitative*). Mahomet declares in an invocation (in C) that the Angel Gabriel is on his side, and points to a pigeon that is seen flying away. The chorus of believers responds in accents of devotion (on a modulation to B major). The soldiers, magistrates, and officials then

come on (*tempo di marcia,* common time, B major). A chorus in two divisions (*stretto* in E major). Mahomet yields to the storm (in a descending phrase of diminished sevenths) and makes his escape. The fierce and gloomy tone of this *finale* is relieved by the phrases given to the three women who foretell Mahomet's triumph, and these motives are further developed in the third act in the scene where Mahomet is enjoying his splendor."

The tears rose to Gambara's eyes, and it was only upon controlling his emotion that he went on.

"Act II. The religion is now established. The Arabs are guarding the Prophet's tent while he speaks with God (chorus in A minor). Mahomet appears (a prayer in F). What a majestic and noble strain is this that forms the bass of the voices, in which I have perhaps enlarged the borders of melody. It was needful to express the wonderful energy of this great human movement which created an architecture, a music, a poetry of its own, a costume and manners. As you listen, you are walking under the arcades of the Generalife, the carved vaults of the Alhambra. The runs and trills depict that delicate mauresque decoration, and the gallant and valorous religion which was destined to wage war against the gallant and valorous chivalry of Christendom. A few brass instruments awake in the orchestra, announcing the Prophet's first triumph (in a broken *cadenza*). The Arabs adore the Prophet (E flat major), and Khaled, Amru, and Ali arrive (*tempo di marcia*). The armies of the faithful have taken many towns and subjugated the three Arabias. Such a grand recitative!—Mahomet rewards his generals by presenting them with maidens.

"And here," said Gambara, sadly, "there is one of those wretched ballets, which interrupt the thread of the finest musical tragedies! But Mahomet elevates it once more by his great prophetic scene, which poor Monsieur Voltaire begins with these words:

"Arabia's time at last has come!

"He is interrupted by a chorus of triumphant Arabs (twelve-eight time, *accelerando*). The tribes arrive in crowds; the horns and brass reappear in the orchestra. General rejoicings ensue, all the voices joining in by degrees, and Mahomet announces polygamy. In the midst of all this triumph, the woman who has been of such faithful service to Mahomet sings a magnificent air (in B major). 'And I,' says she, 'am I no longer loved?' 'We must part. Thou art but a woman, and I am a Prophet; I may still have slaves but no equal.' Just listen to this duet (G sharp minor). What anguish! The woman understands the greatness her hands have built up; she loves Mahomet well enough to sacrifice herself to his glory; she worships him as a god, without criticising him,—without murmuring. Poor woman! His first dupe and his first victim!

"What a subject for the *finale* (in B major) is her grief, brought out in such sombre hues against the acclamations of the chorus, and mingling with Mahomet's tones as he throws his wife aside as a tool of no further use, still showing her that he can never forget her! What fireworks of triumph! what a rush of glad and rippling song go up from the two young voices (first and second soprano) of Ayesha and Hafsa, supported by Ali and his wife, by Omar and Abubekir! Weep!—rejoice!—Triumph and tears! Such is life."

Marianna could not control her tears, and Andrea was so deeply moved that his eyes were moist. The Neapolitan cook was startled by the magnetic influence of the ideas expressed by Gambara's convulsive accents.

The composer looked round, saw the group, and smiled.

"At last you understand me!" said he.

No conqueror, led in pomp to the Capitol under the purple beams of glory, as the crown was placed on his head amid the acclamations of a nation, ever wore such an expression. The composer's face was radiant, like that of a holy martyr. No one dispelled the error. A terrible smile parted Marianna's lips. The Count was appalled by the guilelessness of this mania.

"Act III," said the enchanted musician, reseating himself at the piano. "(*Andantino, solo.*) Mahomet in his seraglio, surrounded by women, but not happy. Quartette of Houris (A major). What pompous harmony, what trills as of ecstatic nightingales! Modulation (into F sharp minor). The theme is stated (on the dominant E and repeated in F major). Here every delight is grouped and expressed to give effect to the contrast of the gloomy *finale* of the first act. After the dancing, Mahomet rises and sings a grand *bravura* air (in F minor), repelling the perfect and devoted love of his first wife, but confessing himself conquered by polygamy. Never has a musician had so fine a subject! The orchestra and the chorus of female voices express the joys of the Houris, while Mahomet reverts to the melancholy strain of the opening. Where is Beethoven," cried Gambara, "to appreciate this prodigious reaction of my opera on itself? How completely it all rests on the bass.

"It is thus that Beethoven composed his E minor symphony. But his heroic work is purely instrumental, whereas here, my heroic phrase is worked out on a sextette of the finest human voices, and a chorus of the faithful on guard at the door of the sacred dwelling. I have every resource of melody and harmony at my command, an orchestra and voices. Listen to the utterance of all these phases of human life, rich and poor;—battle, triumph, and exhaustion!

"Ali arrives, the Koran prevails in every province (duet in D minor). Mahomet places himself in the hands of his two fathers-in-law; he will abdicate his rule and die in retirement to consolidate his work. A magnificent sextette (B flat major). He takes leave of all (solo in F natural). His two fathers-in-law, constituted his vicars or Khalifs, appeal to the people. A great triumphal march, and a prayer by all the Arabs kneeling before the sacred house, the Kasbah, from which a pigeon is seen to fly away (the same key). This prayer, sung by sixty voices and led by the women (in B flat), crowns the stupendous work expressive of the life of

nations and of man. Here you have every emotion, human and divine."

Andrea gazed at Gambara in blank amazement. Though at first he had been struck by the terrible irony of the situation,—this man expressing the feelings of Mahomet's wife without discovering them in Marianna,—the husband's hallucination was as nothing compared with the composer's. There was no hint even of a poetical or musical idea in the hideous cacophony with which he had deluged their ears; the first principles of harmony, the most elementary rules of composition, were absolutely alien to this chaotic structure. Instead of the scientifically compacted music which Gambara described, his fingers produced sequences of fifths, sevenths, and octaves, of major thirds, progressions of fourths with no supporting bass,—a medley of discordant sounds struck out haphazard in such a way as to be excruciating to the least sensitive ear. It is difficult to give any idea of the grotesque performance. New words would be needed to describe this impossible music.

Andrea, painfully affected by this worthy man's madness, colored, and stole a glance at Marianna; while she, turning pale and looking down, could not restrain her tears. In the midst of this chaos of notes, Gambara had every now and then given vent to his rapture in exclamations of delight. He had closed his eyes in ecstasy; had smiled at his piano; had looked at it with a frown; put out his tongue at it after the fashion of the inspired performer,—in short, was quite intoxicated with the poetry that filled his brain, and that he had vainly striven to utter. The strange discords that clashed under his fingers had obviously sounded in his ears like celestial harmonies.

A deaf man, seeing the inspired gaze of his blue eyes open on another world, the rosy glow that tinged his cheeks, and, above all, the heavenly serenity which ecstasy stamped on his proud and noble countenance, would have supposed that he was looking on at the improvisation of a really great artist. The illusion would have been all the more natural

because the performance of this mad music required immense executive skill to achieve such fingering. Gambara must have worked at it for years.

Nor were his hands alone employed; his feet were constantly at work with complicated pedaling; his body swayed to and fro; the perspiration poured down his face while he toiled to produce a great *crescendo* with the feeble means the thankless instrument placed at his command. He stamped, puffed, shouted; his fingers were as swift as the serpent's double tongue; and finally, at the last crash on the keys, he fell back in his chair, resting his head on the top of it.

"*Per Bacco!* I am quite stunned," said the Count as he left the house. "A child dancing on the keyboard would make better music."

"Certainly mere chance could not more successfully avoid hitting two notes in concord than that possessed creature has done during the past hour," said Giardini.

"How is it that the regular beauty of Marianna's features is not spoiled by incessantly hearing such a hideous medley?" said the Count to himself. "Marianna will certainly grow ugly."

"Signor, she must be saved from that," cried Giardini.

"Yes," said Andrea. "I have thought of that. Still, to be sure that my plans are not based on error, I must confirm my doubts by another experiment. I will return and examine the instruments he has invented. To-morrow, after dinner, we will have a little supper. I will send in some wine and little dishes."

The cook bowed.

Andrea spent the following day in superintending the arrangement of the rooms where he meant to install the artist in a humble home.

In the evening the Count made his appearance, and found the wine, according to his instructions, set out with some care by Marianna and Giardini. Gambara proudly exhibited the little drums, on which lay the powder by means of which

he made his observations on the pitch and quality of the sounds emitted by his instruments.

"You see," said he, "by what simple means I can prove the most important propositions. Acoustics thus can show me the analogous effects of sound on every object of its impact. All harmonies start from a common centre and preserve the closest relations among themselves; or rather, harmony, like light, is decomposable by our art as a ray is by a prism."

He then displayed the instruments constructed in accordance with his laws, explaining the changes he had introduced into their constitution. And finally he announced that to conclude this preliminary inspection, which could only satisfy a superficial curiosity, he would perform on an instrument that contained all the elements of a complete orchestra, and which he called a *Panharmonicon.*

"If it is the machine in that huge case, which brings down on us the complaints of the neighborhood whenever you work at it, you will not play on it long," said Giardini. "The police will interfere. Remember that!"

"If that poor idiot stays in the room," said Gambara in a whisper to the Count, "I cannot possibly play."

Andrea dismissed the cook, promising a handsome reward if he would keep watch outside and hinder the neighbors or the police from interfering. Giardini, who had not stinted himself while helping Gambara to wine, was quite willing.

Gambara, without being drunk, was in the condition when every power of the brain is over-wrought; when the walls of the room are transparent; when the garret has no roof, and the soul soars in the empyrean of spirits.

Marianna, with some little difficulty, removed the covers from an instrument as large as a grand piano, but with an upper case added. This strange-looking instrument, besides this second body and its keyboard, supported the openings or bells of various wind instruments and the closed funnels of a few organ pipes.

"Will you play me the prayer you say is so fine at the end of your opera?" said the Count.

To the great surprise of both Marianna and the Count, Gambara began with a succession of chords that proclaimed him a master; and their astonishment gave way first to amazed admiration and then to perfect rapture, effacing all thought of the place and the performer. The effects of a real orchestra could not have been finer than the voices of the wind instruments, which were like those of an organ and combined wonderfully with the harmonies of the strings. But the unfinished condition of the machine set limits to the composer's execution, and his idea seemed all the greater; for, often, the very perfection of a work of art limits its suggestiveness to the recipient soul. Is not this proved by the preference accorded to a sketch rather than a finished picture when on their trial before those who interpret a work in their own mind rather than accept it rounded off and complete?

The purest and serenest music that Andrea had ever listened to rose up from under Gambara's fingers like the vapor of incense from an altar. The composer's voice grew young again, and, far from marring the noble melody, it elucidated it, supported it, guided it,—just as the feeble and quavering voice of an accomplished reader, such as Andrieux, for instance, can expand the meaning of some great scene by Corneille or Racine by lending personal and poetical feeling.

This really angelic strain showed what treasures lay hidden in that stupendous opera, which, however, would never find comprehension so long as the musician persisted in trying to explain it in his present demented state. His wife and the Count were equally divided between the music and their surprise at this hundred-voiced instrument, inside which a stranger might have fancied an invisible chorus of girls were hidden, so closely did some of the tones resemble the human voice; and they dared not express their ideas by a look or a word. Marianna's face was lighted up by a radiant beam of hope which revived the glories of her youth. This renascence of beauty, co-existent with the luminous glow of her husband's genius, cast a shade of regret on the Count's exquisite pleasure in this mysterious hour.

"You are our good genius!" whispered Marianna. "I am tempted to believe that you actually inspire him; for I, who never am away from him, have never heard anything like this."

"And Kadijah's farewell!" cried Gambara, who sang the *cavatina* which he had described the day before as sublime, and which now brought tears to the eyes of the lovers, so perfectly did it express the loftiest devotion of love.

"Who can have taught you such strains?" cried the Count.

"The Spirit," said Gambara. "When he appears, all is fire. I see the melodies there before me; lovely, fresh in vivid hues like flowers. They beam on me, they ring out,—and I listen. But it takes a long, long time to reproduce them."

"Some more!" said Marianna.

Gambara, who could not tire, played on without effort or antics. He performed his overture with such skill, bringing out such rich and original musical effects, that the Count was quite dazzled, and at last believed in some magic like that commanded by Paganini and Liszt,—a style of execution which changes every aspect of music as an art, by giving it a poetic quality far above musical inventions.

"Well, Excellenza, and can you cure him?" asked Giardini, as Andrea came out.

"I shall soon find out," replied the Count. "This man's intellect has two windows; one is closed to the world, the other is open to the heavens. The first is music, the second is poetry. Till now he has insisted on sitting in front of the shuttered window; he must be got to the other. It was you, Giardini, who first started me in the right track, by telling me that your client's mind was clearer after drinking a few glasses of wine."

"Yes," cried the cook, "and I can see what your plan is."

"If it is not too late to make the thunder of poetry audible to his ears, in the midst of the harmonies of some noble music, we must put him into a condition to receive it and ap-

preciate it. Will you help me to intoxicate Gambara, my good fellow? Will you be none the worse for it?"

"What do you mean, Excellenza?"

Andrea went off without answering him, laughing at the acumen still left to this cracked wit.

On the following day he called for Marianna, who had spent the morning in arranging her dress,—a simple but decent outfit, on which she had spent all her little savings. The transformation would have destroyed the illusions of a mere dangler; but Andrea's caprice had become a passion. Marianna, diverted of her picturesque poverty, and looking like any ordinary woman of modest rank, inspired dreams of wedded life.

He handed her into a hackney coach, and told her of the plans he had in his head; and she approved of everything, happy in finding her admirer more lofty, more generous, more disinterested than she had dared to hope. He took her to a little apartment, where he had allowed himself to remind her of his good offices by some of the elegant trifles which have a charm for the most virtuous women.

"I will never speak to you of love till you give up all hope of your Paolo," said the Count to Marianna, as he bid her good-bye at the Rue Froid-Manteau. "You will be witness to the sincerity of my attempts. If they succeed, I may find myself unequal to keeping up my part as a friend; but in that case I shall go far away, Marianna. Though I have firmness enough to work for your happiness, I shall not have so much as will enable me to look on at it."

"Do not say such things. Generosity, too, has its dangers," said she, swallowing down her tears. "But are you going now?"

"Yes," said Andrea; "be happy, without any drawbacks."

If Giardini might be believed, the new treatment was beneficial to both husband and wife. Every evening after his wine, Gambara seemed less self-centered, talked more, and with great lucidity; he even spoke at last of reading the

papers. Andrea could not help quaking at his unexpectedly rapid success: but though his distress made him aware of the strength of his passion, it did not make him waver in his virtuous resolve.

One day he called to note the progress of this singular cure. Though the state of the patient at first gave him satisfaction, his joy was dashed by Marianna's beauty, for an easy life had restored its brilliancy. He called now every evening to enjoy calm and serious conversation, to which he contributed lucid and well considered arguments controverting Gambara's singular theories. He took advantage of the remarkable acumen of the composer's mind as to every point not too directly bearing on his manias, to obtain his assent to principles in various branches of art, and apply them subsequently to music. All was well so long as the patient's brain was heated with the fumes of wine; but as soon as he had recovered—or, rather, lost—his reason, he was a monomaniac once more.

However, Paolo was already more easily diverted by the impression of outside things; his mind was more capable of addressing itself to several points at a time.

Andrea, who took an artistic interest in his semi-medical treatment, thought at last that the time had come for a great experiment. He would give a dinner at his own house, to which he would invite Giardini for the sake of keeping the tragedy and the parody side by side, and afterwards take the party to the first performance of *Robert le Diable*. He had seen it in rehearsal, and he judged it well fitted to open his patient's eyes.

By the end of the second course, Gambara was already tipsy, laughing at himself with a very good grace; while Giardini confessed that his own culinary innovations were not worth a rush. Andrea had neglected nothing that could contribute to this twofold miracle. The wines of Orvieto and of Montefiascone, conveyed with the peculiar care needed in moving them, Lachrymachristi and Giro,—all the heady liqueurs of *la cara Patria*,—went to their brains with the

intoxication alike of the grape and of fond memory. At dessert the musician and the cook both abjured every heresy; one was humming a *cavatina* by Rossini, and the other piling delicacies on his plate and washing them down with Maraschino from Zara, to the prosperity of the French *cuisine*.

The Count took advantage of this happy frame of mind, and Gambara allowed himself to be taken to the opera like a lamb.

At the first introductory notes Gambara's intoxication appeared to clear away and make way for the feverish excitement which sometimes brought his judgment and his imagination into perfect harmony; for it was their habitual disagreement, no doubt, that caused his madness. The ruling idea of that great musical drama appeared to him, no doubt, in its noble simplicity, like a lightning flash, illuminating the utter darkness in which he lived. To his unsealed eyes this music revealed the immense horizons of a world in which he found himself for the first time, though recognizing it as that he had seen in his dreams. He fancied himself transported into the scenery of his native land, where that beautiful Italian landscape begins at what Napoleon so cleverly described as the *glacis* of the Alps. Carried back by memory to the time when his young and eager brain was as yet untroubled by the ecstasy of his too exuberant imagination he listened with religious awe and would not utter a single word. The Count respected the internal travail of his soul. Till half-past twelve Gambara sat so perfectly motionless that the frequenters of the opera house took him, no doubt, for what he was—a man drunk.

On their return, Andrea began to attack Meyerbeer's work, in order to wake up Gambara, who sat sunk in the half-torpid state common in drunkards.

"What is there in that incoherent score to reduce you to a condition of somnambulism?" asked Andrea, when they got out at his house. "The story of *Robert le Diable*, to be sure, is not devoid of interest, and Holtei has worked it out with great skill in a drama that is very well written and full

of strong and pathetic situations; but the French librettist has contrived to extract from it the most ridiculous farrago of nonsense. The absurdities of the libretti of Vesari and Schikander are not to compare with those of the words of Robert le Diable: it is a dramatic nightmare, which oppresses the hearer without deeply moving him.

"And Meyerbeer has given the devil a too prominent part. Bertram and Alice represent the contest between right and wrong, the spirits of good and evil. This antagonism offered a splendid opportunity to the composer. The sweetest melodies, in juxtaposition with harsh and crude strains, was the natural outcome of the form of the story; but in the German composer's score the demons sing better than the saints. The heavenly airs belie their origin, and when the composer abandons the infernal motives he returns to them as soon as possible, fatigued with the effort of keeping aloof from them. Melody, the golden thread that ought never to be lost throughout so vast a plan, often vanishes from Meyerbeer's work. Feeling counts for nothing, the heart has no part in it. Hence we never come upon those happy inventions, those artless scenes, which captivate all our sympathies and leave a blissful impression on the soul.

"Harmony reigns supreme, instead of being the foundation from which the melodic groups of the musical picture stand forth. These discordant combinations, far from moving the listener, arouse in him a feeling analogous to that which he would experience on seeing a rope-dancer hanging to a thread and swaying between life and death. Never does a soothing strain come in to mitigate the fatiguing suspense. It really is as though the composer had had no other object in view than to produce a baroque effect without troubling himself about musical truth or unity, or about the capabilities of human voices which are swamped by this flood of instrumental noise."

"Silence, my friend!" cried Gambara. "I am still under the spell of that glorious chorus of hell, made still more terrible by the long trumpets,—a new method of instrumenta-

tion. The broken *cadenzas* which give such force to Robert's scene, the *cavatina* in the fourth act, the *finale* of the first, all hold me in the grip of a supernatural power. No, not even Gluck's declamation ever produced so prodigious an effect, and I am amazed by such skill and learning."

"Signor Maestro," said Andrea, smiling, "allow me to contradict you. Gluck, before he wrote, reflected long; he calculated the chances, and he decided on a plan which might be subsequently modified by his inspirations as to detail, but hindered him from ever losing his way. Hence his power of emphasis, his declamatory style thrilling with life and truth. I quite agree with you that Meyerbeer's learning is transcendent; but science is a defect when it evicts inspiration, and it seems to me that we have in this opera the painful toil of a refined craftsman who in his music has but picked up thousands of phrases out of other operas, damned or forgotten, and appropriated them, while extending, modifying, or condensing them. But he has fallen into the error of all selectors of *centos,*—an abuse of good things. This clever harvester of notes is lavish of discords, which, when too often introduced, fatigue the ear till those great effects pall upon it which a composer should husband with care to make the more effective use of them when the situation requires it. These enharmonic passages recur to satiety, and the abuse of the plagal cadence deprives it of its religious solemnity.

"I know, of course, that every musician has certain forms to which he drifts back in spite of himself; he should watch himself so as to avoid that blunder. A picture in which there were no colors but blue and red would be untrue to nature, and fatigue the eye. And thus the constantly recurring rhythm in the score of *Robert le Diable* makes the work, as a whole, appear monotonous. As to the effect of the long trumpets, of which you speak, it has long been known in Germany; and what Meyerbeer offers us as a novelty was constantly used by Mozart, who gives just such a chorus to the devils in *Don Giovanni.*"

By plying Gambara, meanwhile, with fresh libations, Andrea thus strove, by his contradictoriness, to bring the musician back to a true sense of music, by proving to him that his so-called mission was not to try to regenerate an art beyond his powers, but to seek to express himself in another form; namely, that of poetry.

"But, my dear Count, you have understood nothing of that stupendous musical drama," said Gambara, airily, as standing in front of Andrea's piano he struck the keys, listened to the tone, and then seated himself, meditating for a few minutes as if to collect his ideas.

"To begin with, you must know," said he, "that an ear as practised as mine at once detected that labor of choice and setting of which you spoke. Yes, the music has been selected, lovingly, from the storehouse of a rich and fertile imagination wherein learning has squeezed every idea to extract the very essence of music. I will illustrate the process."

He rose to carry the candles into the adjoining room, and before sitting down again he drank a full glass of Giro, a Sardinian wine, as full of fire as the old wines of Tokay can inspire.

"Now, you see," said Gambara, "this music is not written for misbelievers, nor for those who know not love. If you have never suffered from the virulent attacks of an evil spirit who shifts your object just as you are taking aim, who puts a fatal end to your highest hopes,—in one word, if you have never felt the devil's tail whisking over the world, the opera of *Robert le Diable* must be to you, what the Apocalypse is to those who believe that all things will end with them. But if, persecuted and wretched, you understand that Spirit of Evil,—the monstrous ape who is perpetually employed in destroying the work of God,—if you can conceive of him as having, not indeed loved, but ravished, an almost divine woman, and achieved through her the joy of paternity; as so loving his son that he would rather have him eternally miserable with himself than think of him as eter-

nally happy with God; if, finally, you can imagine the mother's soul for ever hovering over the child's head to snatch it from the atrocious temptations offered by its father,—even then you will have but a faint idea of this stupendous drama, which needs but little to make it worthy of comparison with Mozart's *Don Giovanni*. *Don Giovanni* is in its perfection the greater, I grant; *Robert le Diable* expresses ideas, *Don Giovanni* arouses sensations. *Don Giovanni* is as yet the only musical work in which harmony and melody are combined in exactly the right proportions. In this lies its only superiority, for *Robert* is the richer work. But how vain are such comparisons since each is so beautiful in its own way!

"To me, suffering as I do from the demon's repeated shocks, Robert spoke with greater power than to you; it struck me as being at the same time vast and concentrated.

"Thanks to you, I have been transported to the glorious land of dreams where our senses expand, and the world works on a scale which is gigantic as compared with man."

He was silent for a space.

"I am trembling still," said the ill-starred artist, "from the four bars of cymbals which pierced to my marrow as they open that short, abrupt introduction with its solo for trombone, its flutes, oboes, and clarionet, all suggesting the most fantastic effects of color. The *andante* in C minor is a foretaste of the subject of the evocation of the ghosts in the abbey, and gives grandeur to the scene by anticipating the spiritual struggle. I shivered."

Gambara pressed the keys with a firm hand and expanded Meyerbeer's theme in a masterly *fantasia*, a sort of outpouring of his soul after the manner of Liszt. It was no longer the piano, it was a whole orchestra that they heard; the very genius of music rose before them.

"That is worthy of Mozart!" he exclaimed. "See how that German can handle his chords, and through what masterly modulations he raises the image of terror to come to the dominant C. I can hear all hell in it!

"The curtain rises. What do I see? The only scene to which we gave the epithet infernal: an orgy of knights in Sicily. In that chorus in F every human passion is unchained in a bacchanalian *allegro*. Every thread by which the devil holds us is pulled. Yes, that is the sort of glee that comes over men when they dance on the edge of a precipice; they make themselves giddy. What *go* there is in that chorus!

"Against that chorus—the reality of life—the simple life of every-day virtue stands out in the air, in G minor, sung by Raimbaut. For a moment it refreshed my spirit to hear the simple fellow, representative of verdurous and fruitful Normandy, which he brings to Robert's mind in the midst of his drunkenness. The sweet influence of his beloved native land lends a touch of tender color to this gloomy opening.

"Then comes the wonderful air in C major, supported by the chorus in C minor, so expressive of the subject. *'Je suis Robert!'* he immediately breaks out. The wrath of the prince, insulted by his vassal, is already more than natural anger; but it will die away, for memories of his childhood come to him, with Alice, in the bright and graceful *allegro* in A major.

"Can you not hear the cries of the innocent dragged into this infernal drama,—a persecuted creature? *'Non, non,'* " sang Gambara, who made the consumptive piano sing. "His native land and tender emotions have come back to him; his childhood and its memories have blossomed anew in Robert's heart. And now his mother's shade rises up, bringing with it soothing religious thoughts. It is religion that lives in that beautiful song in E major, with its wonderful harmonic and melodic progression in the words:

> **"Car dans les cieux, comme sur la terre,**
> **Sa mère va prier pour lui.**

"Here the struggle begins between the unseen powers and the only human being who has the fire of hell in his veins to enable him to resist them; and to make this quite clear,

as Bertram comes on, the great musician has given the orchestra a passage introducing a reminiscence of Raimbaut's ballad. What a stroke of art! What cohesion of all the parts! What solidity of structure!

"The devil is there, in hiding, but restless. The conflict of the antagonistic powers opens with Alice's terror; she recognizes the devil of the image of Saint Michael in her village. The musical subject is worked out through an endless variety of phases. The antithesis indispensable in opera is emphatically presented in a noble *recitative*, such as a Gluck might have composed, between Bertram and Robert:

"Tu ne sauras jamais à quel excès je t'aime.

"In that diabolical C minor, Bertram, with his terrible bass, begins his work of undermining which will overthrow every effort of the vehement, passionate man.

"Here, everything is appalling. Will the crime get possession of the criminal? Will the executioner seize his victim? Will sorrow consume the artist's genius? Will the disease kill the patient? or, will the guardian angel save the Christian?

"Then comes the *finale*, the gambling scene in which Bertram tortures his son by rousing him to tremendous emotions. Robert, beggared, frenzied, searching everything, eager for blood, fire, and sword, is his own son; in this mood he is exactly like his father. What hideous glee we hear in Bertram's words: *'Je ris de tes coups!'* And how perfectly the Venetian *barcarole* comes in here. Through what wondrous transitions the diabolical parent is brought on to the stage once more to make Robert throw the dice.

"This first act is overwhelming to any one capable of working out the subjects in his very heart, and lending them the breadth of development which the composer intended them to call forth.

"Nothing but love could now be contrasted with this noble symphony of song, in which you will detect no monotony,

no repetition of means and effects. It is one, but many; the characteristic of all that is truly great and natural.

"I breathe more freely; I find myself in the elegant circle of a gallant court; I hear Isabella's charming phrases, fresh, but almost melancholy, and the female chorus in two divisions, and in *imitation,* with a suggestion of the Moorish coloring of Spain. Here the terrifying music is softened to gentler hues, like a storm dying away, and ends in the florid prettiness of a duet wholly unlike anything that has come before it. After the turmoil of a camp full of errant heroes, we have a picture of love. Poet! I thank thee! My heart could not have borne much more. If I could not here and there pluck the daisies of a French light opera, if I could not hear the gentle wit of a woman able to love and to charm, I could not endure the terrible deep note on which Bertram comes in, saying to his son: *'Si je le permets!'* when Robert has promised the princess he adores that he will conquer with the arms she has bestowed on him.

"The hopes of the gambler cured by love, the love of a most beautiful woman,—did you observe that magnificent Sicilian, with her hawk's eye secure of her prey? (What interpreters that composer has found!) the hopes of the man are mocked at by the hopes of hell in the tremendous cry: *'A toi, Robert de Normandie!'*

"And are not you struck by the gloom and horror of those long-held notes, to which the words are set: *'Dans la forêt prochaine'?* We find here all the sinister spells of *Jerusalem Delivered,* just as we find all chivalry in the chorus with the Spanish lilt, and in the march tune. How original is the *allegro* with the modulations of the four cymbals (tuned to C, D, C, G,)! How elegant is the call to the lists! The whole movement of the heroic life of the period is there; the mind enters into it; I read in it a romance, a poem of chivalry. The *exposition* is now finished; the resources of music would seem to be exhausted; you have never heard anything like it before; and yet it is homogeneous. You have had life set before you, and its one and only *crux:* 'Shall

I be happy or unhappy?' is the philosopher's query. 'Shall I be saved or damned?' asks the Christian."

With these words Gambara struck the last chord of the chorus, dwelt on it with a melancholy modulation, and then rose to drink another large glass of Giro. This half-African vintage gave his face a deeper flush, for his passionate and wonderful sketch of Meyerbeer's opera had made him turn a little pale.

"That nothing may be lacking to this composition," he went on, "the great artist has generously added the only *buffo* duet permissible for a devil: that in which he tempts the unhappy troubadour. The composer has set jocosity side by side with horror—a jocosity in which he mocks at the only realism he had allowed himself amid the sublime imaginings of his work—the pure calm love of Alice and Raimbaut; and their life is overshadowed by the forecast of evil.

"None but a lofty soul can feel the noble style of these *buffo* airs; they have neither the superabundant frivolity of Italian music nor the vulgar accent of French commonplace; rather have they the majesty of Olympus. There is the bitter laughter of a divine being mocking the surprise of a troubadour Don-Juanizing himself. But for this dignity we should be too suddenly brought down to the general tone of the opera, here stamped on that terrible fury of diminished sevenths which resolves itself into an infernal waltz, and finally brings us face to face with the demons.

"How emphatically Bertram's couplet stands out in B minor against that diabolical chorus, depicting his paternity, but mingling in fearful despair with these demoniacal strains.

"Then comes the delightful transition of Alice's reappearance, with the *ritornel* in B flat. I can still hear that air of angelical simplicity—the nightingale after a storm. Thus the grand leading idea of the whole is worked out in the details; for what could be more perfectly in contrast with the tumult of devils tossing in the pit than that wonderful air given to Alice? *'Quand j'ai quitté la Normandie.'*

"The golden thread of melody flows on, side by side with the mighty harmony, like a heavenly hope; it is embroidered on it, and with what marvelous skill! Genius never lets go of the science that guides it. Here Alice's song is in B flat leading into F sharp, the key of the demon's chorus. Do you hear the tremolo in the orchestra? The host of devils clamor for Robert.

"Bertram now reappears, and this is the culminating point of musical interest: after a *recitative,* worthy of comparison with the finest work of the great masters, comes the fierce conflict in E flat between two tremendous forces—one on the words *'Oui, tu me connais!'* on a diminished seventh; the other, on that sublime F, *'Le ciel est avec moi.'* Hell and the Crucifix have met for battle. Next we have Bertram threatening Alice, the most violent pathos ever heard—the Spirit of Evil expatiating complacently, and, as usual, appealing to personal interest. Robert's arrival gives us the magnificent unaccompanied trio in A flat, the first skirmish between the two rival forces and the man. And note how clearly that is expressed," said Gambara, epitomizing the scene with such passion of expression as startled Andrea.

"All this avalanche of music, from the clash of cymbals in common time, has been gathering up to this contest of three voices. The magic of evil triumphs! Alice flies, and you have the duet in D between Bertram and Robert. The devil sets his talons in the man's heart; he tears it to make it his own; he works on every feeling. Honor, hope, eternal and infinite pleasures—he displays them all. He places him, as he did Jesus, on the pinnacle of the Temple, and shows him all the treasures of the earth, the storehouse of sin. He nettles him to flaunt his courage; and the man's nobler mind is expressed in his exclamation:

> "Des chevaliers de ma patrie
> L'honneur toujours fut le soutien!

"And finally, to crown the work, the theme comes in which

sounded the note of fatality at the beginning. Thus, the leading strain, the magnificent call to the dead:

"Nonnes qui reposez sous cette froide pierre,
M'entendez-vous?

"The career of the music, gloriously worked out, is gloriously finished by the *allegro vivace* of the bacchanalian chorus in D minor. This, indeed, is the triumph of hell! Roll on, harmony, and wrap us in a thousand folds! Roll on, bewitch us! The powers of darkness have clutched their prey; they hold him while they dance. The great genius, born to conquer and to reign, is lost! The devils rejoice, misery stifles genius, passion will wreck the knight!"

And here Gambara improvised a *fantasia* of his own on the bacchanalian chorus, with ingenious variations, and humming the air in a melancholy drone as if to express the secret sufferings he had known.

"Do you hear the heavenly lamentations of neglected love?" he said. "Isabella calls to Robert above the grand chorus of knights riding forth to the tournament, in which the *motifs* of the second act reappear to make it clear that the third act has all taken place in a supernatural sphere. This is real life again. This chorus dies away at the approach of the hellish enchantment brought by Robert with the talisman. The deviltry of the third act is to be carried on. Here we have the duet with the viol; the rhythm is highly expressive of the brutal desires of a man who is omnipotent, and the Princess, by plaintive phrases, tries to win her lover back to moderation. The musician has here placed himself in a situation of great difficulty, and has surmounted it in the loveliest number of the whole opera. How charming is the melody of the *cavatina 'Grâce pour toi!'* All the women present understood it well; each saw herself seized and snatched away on the stage. That part alone would suffice to make the fortune of the opera. Every woman felt herself engaged in a struggle with some violent lover. Never was music so passionate and so dramatic.

"The whole world now rises in arms against the reprobate. This *finale* may be criticised for its resemblance to that of *Don Giovanni;* but there is this immense difference: in Isabella we have the expression of the noblest faith, a true love that will save Robert, for he scornfully rejects the infernal powers bestowed on him, while Don Giovanni persists in his unbelief. Moreover, that particular fault is common to every composer who has written a *finale* since Mozart. The *finale* to *Don Giovanni* is one of those classic forms that are invented once for all.

"At last religion wins the day, uplifting the voice that governs worlds, that invites all sorrow to come for consolation, all repentance to be forgiven and helped.

"The whole house was stirred by the chorus:

> "Malheureux ou coupables,
> Hatez-vous d'accourir!

"In the terrific tumult of raving passions, the holy Voice would have been unheard; but at this critical moment it sounds like thunder; the divine Catholic Church rises glorious in light. And here I was amazed to find that after such lavish use of harmonic treasure, the composer had come upon a new vein with the splendid chorus: *'Gloire à la Providence'* in the manner of Händel.

"Robert rushes on with his heartrending cry: *'Si je pouvais prier!'* and Bertram, driven by the infernal decree, pursues his son, and makes a last effort. Alice has called up the vision of the Mother, and now comes the grand trio to which the whole opera has led up: the triumph of the soul over matter, of the Spirit of Good over the Spirit of Evil. The strains of piety prevail over the chorus of hell, and happiness appears glorious; but here the music is weaker. I only saw a cathedral instead of hearing a concert of angels in bliss, and a divine prayer consecrating the union of Robert and Isabella. We ought not to have been left oppressed by the spells of hell; we ought to emerge with hope in our heart.

"I, as musician and a Catholic, wanted another prayer like

that in *Mosè.* I should have liked to see how Germany would contend with Italy, what Meyerbeer could do in rivalry with Rossini.

"However, in spite of this trifling blemish, the writer cannot say that after five hours of such solid music, a Parisian prefers a bit of ribbon to a musical masterpiece. You heard how the work was applauded; it will go through five hundred performances! If the French really understand that music——"

"It is because it expresses ideas," the Count put in.

"No; it is because it sets forth in a definite shape a picture of the struggle in which so many perish, and because every individual life is implicated in it through memory. Ah! I, hapless wretch, should have been too happy to hear the sound of those heavenly voices I have so often dreamed of."

Hereupon Gambara fell into a musical day-dream, improvising the most lovely melodious and harmonious *cavatina* that Andrea would ever hear on earth; a divine strain divinely performed on a theme as exquisite as that of *O filii et filiæ,* but graced with additions such as none but the loftiest musical genius could devise.

The Count sat lost in keen admiration: the clouds cleared away, the blue sky opened, figures of angels appeared lifting the veil that hid the sanctuary, and the light of heaven poured down.

There was a sudden silence.

The Count, surprised at the cessation of the music, looked at Gambara, who, with fixed gaze, in the attitude of a visionary, murmured the word: "God!"

Andrea waited till the composer had descended from the enchanted realm to which he had soared on the many-hued wings of inspiration, intending to show him the truth by the light he himself would bring down with him.

"Well," said he, pouring him out another bumper of wine and clinking glasses with him, "this German has, you see, written a sublime opera without troubling himself with theories, while those musicians who write grammars of harmony may, like literary critics, be atrocious composers."

"Then you do not like my music?"

"I do not say so. But if, instead of carrying musical principles to an extreme—which takes you too far—you would simply try to arouse our feelings, you would be better understood, unless indeed you have mistaken your vocation. You are a great poet."

"What," cried Gambara, "are twenty-five years of study all in vain? Am I to learn the imperfect language of men when I have the key to the heavenly tongue? Oh, if you are right,—I should die."

"No, no. You are great and strong; you would begin life again, and I would support you. We would show the world the noble and rare alliance of a rich man and an artist in perfect sympathy and understanding."

"Do you mean it?" asked Gambara, struck with amazement.

"As I have told you, you are a poet more than a musician."

"A poet, a poet! It is better than nothing. But tell me truly, which do you esteem most highly, Mozart or Homer?"

"I admire them equally."

"On your honor?"

"On my honor."

"H'm! Once more. What do you think of Meyerbeer and Byron?"

"You have measured them by naming them together."

The Count's carriage was in waiting. The composer and his noble physician ran down-stairs, and in a few minutes they were with Marianna.

As they went in, Gambara threw himself into his wife's arms, but she drew back a step and turned away her head. the husband also drew back and beamed on the Count.

"Oh, monsieur!" said Gambara in a husky voice, "you might have left me my illusions." He hung his head, and then fell.

"What have you done to him? He is dead drunk!" cried

Marianna, looking down at her husband with a mingled expression of pity and disgust.

The Count, with the help of his servant, picked up Gambara and laid him on his bed.

Then Andrea left, his heart exultant with horrible gladness.

The Count let the usual hour for calling slip past next day, for he began to fear lest he had duped himself and had made this humble couple pay too dear for their improved circumstances and added wisdom, since their peace was destroyed for ever.

At last Giardini came to him with a note from Marianna.

"Come," she wrote, "the mischief is not so great as you so cruelly meant it to be."

"Excellenza," said the cook, while Andrea was making ready, "you treated us splendidly last evening. But apart from the wine, which was excellent, your steward did not put anything on the table that was worthy to set before a true epicure. You will not deny, I suppose, that the dish I sent up to you on the day when you did me the honor to sit down at my board, contained the quintessence of all those that disgraced your magnificent service of plate? And when I awoke this morning I remembered the promise you once made me of a place as *chef*. Henceforth I consider myself as a member of your household."

"I thought of the same thing a few days ago," replied Andrea. "I mentioned you to the secretary of the Austrian Embassy, and you have permission to recross the Alps as soon as you please. I have a castle in Croatia which I rarely visit. There you may combine the offices of gate-keeper, butler, and steward, with two hundred crowns a year. Your wife will have as much for doing all the rest of the work. You may make all the experiments you please *in anima vili*, that is to say on the stomach of my vassals. Here is a cheque for your traveling expenses."

Giardini kissed the Count's hand after the Neapolitan fashion.

"Excellenza," said he, "I accept the cheque, but beg to decline the place. It would dishonor me to give up my art by losing the opinion of the most perfect epicures, who are certainly to be found in Paris."

When Andrea arrived at Gambara's lodgings, the musician rose to welcome him.

"My generous friend," said he, with the utmost frankness, "you either took advantage, last evening, of the weakness of my brain to make a fool of me, or else your brain is no more capable of standing the test of the heady liquors of our native Latium, than mine is. I will assume this latter hypothesis; I would rather doubt your digestion than your heart. Be this as it may, henceforth I drink no more wine —for ever. The abuse of good liquor last evening led me into much guilty folly. When I remember that I very nearly——" He gave a glance of terror at Marianna. "As to the wretched opera you took me to hear, I have thought it over, and it is, after all, music written on ordinary lines, a mountain of piled-up notes, *verba et voces.* It is but the dregs of the nectar I can drink in deep draughts as I reproduce the heavenly music that I hear! It is a patchwork of airs of which I could trace the origin. The passage, '*Gloire à la Providence*' is too much like a bit of Händel; the chorus of knights is closely related to the Scotch air in *La Dame Blanche;* in short, if this opera is a success, it is because the music is borrowed from everybody's—so it ought to be popular.

"I will say good-bye to you, my dear friend. I have had some ideas seething in my brain since the morning that only wait to soar up to God on the wings of song, but I wished to see you. Good-bye; I must ask forgiveness of the Muse. We shall meet at dinner to-night—but no wine; at any rate, none for me. I am firmly resolved——"

"I give him up!" cried Andrea, flushing red.

"And you restore my sense of conscience," said Marianna. "I dared not appeal to it! My friend, my friend, it is no fault of ours; he does not want to be cured."

Six years after this, in January 1837, such artists as were so unlucky as to damage their wind or stringed instruments, generally took them to the Rue Froid-Manteau, to a squalid and horrible house, where, on the fifth floor, dwelt an old Italian named Gambara.

For five years past he had been left to himself, deserted by his wife; he had gone through many misfortunes. An instrument on which he had relied to make his fortune, and which he called a *Panharmonicon,* had been sold by order of the Court on the public square, Place du Châtelet, together with a cartload of music paper scrawled with notes. The day after the sale, these scores had served in the market to wrap up butter, fish, and fruit.

Thus the three grand operas of which the poor man would boast, but which an old Neapolitan cook, who was now but a patcher up of broken meats, declared to be a heap of nonsense, were scattered throughout Paris on the trucks of costermongers. But at any rate, the landlord had got his rent and the bailiffs their expenses.

According to the Neapolitan cook—who warmed up for the street-walkers of the Rue Froid-Manteau the fragments left from the most sumptuous dinners in Paris—Signora Gambara had gone off to Italy with a Milanese nobleman, and no one knew what had become of her. Worn out with fifteen years of misery, she was very likely ruining the Count by her extravagant luxury, for they were so devotedly adoring that, in all his life, Giardini could recall no instance of such a passion.

Towards the end of that very January, one evening when Giardini was chatting with a girl who had come to buy her supper, about the divine Marianna—so poor, so beautiful, so heroically devoted, and who had, nevertheless, "gone the way of them all," the cook, his wife, and the street-girl saw coming towards them a woman fearfully thin, with a sunburned, dusty face; a nervous walking skeleton, looking at the numbers, and trying to recognize a house.

"Ecco la Marianna!" exclaimed the cook.

Marianna recognized Giardini, the erewhile cook, in the poor fellow she saw, without wondering by what series of disasters he had sunk to keep a miserable shop for second-hand food. She went in and sat down, for she had come from Fontainebleau. She had walked fourteen leagues that day, after begging her bread from Turin to Paris.

She frightened that terrible trio! Of all her wondrous beauty nothing remained but her fine eyes, dimmed and sunken. The only thing faithful to her was misfortune.

She was welcomed by the skilled old instrument mender, who greeted her with unspeakable joy.

"Why, here you are, my poor Marianna!" said he, warmly. "During your absence they sold up my instrument and my operas."

It would have been difficult to kill the fatted calf for the return of the Samaritan, but Giardini contributed the fag end of a salmon, the trull paid for wine, Gambara produced some bread, Signora Giardini lent a cloth, and the unfortunates all supped together in the musician's garret.

When questioned as to her adventures, Marianna would make no reply; she only raised her beautiful eyes to heaven and whispered to Giardini:

"He married a dancer!"

"And how do you mean to live?" said the girl. "The journey has ruined you, and——"

"And made me an old woman," said Marianna. "No, that is not the result of fatigue or hardship, but of grief."

"And why did you never send your man here any money?" asked the girl.

Marianna's only answer was a look, but it went to the woman's heart.

"She is proud with a vengeance!" she exclaimed. "And much good it has done her!" she added, in Giardini's ear.

All that year musicians took especial care of their instruments, and repairs did not bring in enough to enable the poor couple to pay their way; the wife, too, did not earn much by her needle, and they were compelled to turn their

talents to account in the lowest form of employment. They would go out together in the dark to the Champs Élysées and sing duets, which Gambara, poor fellow, accompanied on a wretched guitar. On the way, Marianna, who on these expeditions covered her head with a sort of veil of coarse muslin, would take her husband to a grocer's shop in the Faubourg Saint-Honoré and give him two or three thimblefuls of brandy to make him tipsy; otherwise he could not play. Then they would stand up together in front of the smart people sitting on the chairs, and one of the greatest geniuses of the time, the unrecognized Orpheus of Modern Music, would perform passages from his operas—pieces so remarkable that they could extract a few half-pence from Parisian supineness. When some *dilettante* of comic operas happened to be sitting there and did not recognize from what work they were taken, he would question the woman dressed like a Greek priestess, who held out a bottle-stand of stamped metal in which she collected charity.

"I say, my dear, what is that music out of?"

"The opera of *Mahomet*," Marianna would reply.

As Rossini composed an opera called *Mahomet II.*, the amateur would say to his wife, sitting at his side:

"What a pity it is that they will never give us at the Italiens any operas by Rossini but those we know. That is really very fine music!"

And Gambara would smile.

Only a few days since, this unhappy couple had to pay the trifling sum of thirty-six francs as arrears of rent for the cock-loft in which they lived resigned. The grocer would not give them credit for the brandy with which Marianna plied her husband to enable him to play. Gambara was, consequently, so unendurably bad that the ears of the wealthy were irresponsive, and the tin bottle-stand remained empty.

It was nine o'clock in the evening. A handsome Italian, the Principessa Massimilla Di Varese, took pity on the poor

creatures; she gave them forty francs and questioned them, discerning from the woman's thanks that she was a Venetian. Prince Emilio would know the history of their woes, and Marianna told it, making no complaints of God or men.

"Madame," said Gambara, as she ended, for he was sober, "we are the victims of our own superiority. My music is good. But as soon as music transcends feeling and becomes an idea, only persons of genius should be the hearers, for they alone are capable of responding to it! It is my misfortune that I have heard the chorus of angels, and believed that men could understand those strains. The same thing happens to women when their love assumes a divine aspect: men cannot understand them."

This speech was well worth the forty francs bestowed by Massimilla; she took out a second gold piece, and told Marianna she would write to Andrea Marcosini.

"Do not write to him, madame!" exclaimed Marianna. "And God grant you to be always beautiful!"

"Let us provide for them," said the Princess to her husband; "for this man has remained faithful to the Ideal which we have killed."

As he saw the gold pieces, Gambara shed tears; and then a vague reminiscence of old scientific experiments crossed his mind, and the hapless composer, as he wiped his eyes, spoke these words, which the circumstances made pathetic:

"Water is a product of burning."

PARIS, *June* 1837.

SERAPHITA

AND OTHER STORIES

INTRODUCTION

THE contents of the present volume stand alone in the *Comédie Humaine,* or nearly alone; but they are very closely connected with each other. And to those who care to trace the connection of an author's nature and his work (without tracing—useless as it may be in some cases, and superfluous in most—it will never be possible for any one to appreciate Balzac to the full), they have an interest not inferior to that of any other portion. In one of them, moreover, *Séraphita,* we shall find Balzac's most successful and brilliant essays of style as style—essays so different from his general practice, that they have raised some curious speculations. It is known that, in the early thirties, Balzac and Gautier were a good deal together, and even worked in some sort of collaboration. In one of his books, *Béatrix,* Balzac has printed a passage which, as it happens, is known to be Gautier's, and there is a good deal in *Séraphita* which may be suspected of a similar origin.

To those who care for the story, or who are attracted to the *Comédie* as a varied storehouse of observation of ordinary life, this volume must seem, and, I believe, almost invariably does seem, rather dreary and repellent stuff. To others, it yields in interest to no volume of the *Comédie,* though the interest may be of a peculiar and special kind. As most people who know anything at all about Balzac are aware, Louis Lambert is Balzac himself; the *Traité de la Volonté* was actually written, and destroyed by an irate schoolmaster;

and most of the incidents brought in have more or less foundation in fact. The same, of course, cannot be said of *Les Proscrits* and *Séraphita*. But the former, while belonging in kind generally to the *Etudes Philosophiques*, connects itself on another side with the *Contes Drolatiques*, and with Balzac's not rare studies of the Middle Ages. About these he seems always to have had a hankering to write, which was due partly to his lifelong cult of Sir Walter, and partly to a curious delusion that he was himself a born historical novelist. *Séraphita*, on the other hand, has a sort of kinship with other products of the 1830 period.

But all the books are perhaps most interesting to us, first, as showing Balzac's specially "philosophic" velleities; and secondly, as exhibiting a side of him which is apt to be overlooked—his character as a reader and a student.

The "philosophy" has been rather variously judged. It has seldom been taken very seriously; but attempts have sometimes been made to discover in it anticipations of later discoveries or, to adopt a much safer word, theories. These anticipation-hunts rarely send the hunter home with an empty bag, but it is as rarely that the game is of certain quality. Indeed, if we remember that even in the widest and vaguest sense, "philosophy" was practically exhausted many hundred years ago—that new philosophies are only the old ones with their coats and trousers turned, scoured, dyed, and altered somewhat in fashion—it would be very odd if a clever man, even with no regular training or special vocation, did not anticipate more or less what others of his contemporaries are going to think. For the rest, Balzac's philosophy is of a distinctly loose sort, and may very well have occurred to him in whole or in part when he was a studious, if irregularly studious, schoolboy. It is, indeed, very much of the kind to

which schoolboys of some brains are as prone as men of riper years, and in which they are perhaps as likely to attain a result, or what looks like it.

The second bearing of these curious books is more tangible. It is certain that Balzac, unlike Dickens, his fellow *voyant*, and still more unlike most of the "realists" who claim kindred with him, was a very great reader. In his period of production, despite the enormous expense of time which his methods of writing imposed on him, he seems to have read a great deal; in his boyhood and in the ten years of his apprenticeship he seems to have read enormously. He certainly never attained to exact scientific or scholarly knowledge of any subject by means of books. He did not know literature or history, much less philosophy, as he knew legal procedure and the theory of speculation, the signboards of Paris, and not a little of what went on inside Parisian waistcoats and under Parisian hats. But he had a vast amount of "fine confused" reading, as the Swedenborgian learning of *Séraphita*, no less than the not altogether alien lore of *Sur Catherine de Medicis*, shows. He was even, as not a few passages in his reviews, in his other miscellaneous writings, and in his letters show, rather inclined to overvalue and plume himself upon this reading. Nor was it without effect, both good and bad, on his work. On the one hand, it added to that slightly undigested character which, with rare exceptions, is characteristic of him; on the other, it largely helped the appearance of variety, fulness, encyclopædic knowledge, and interest which is the complement and atonement of this undigestedness. Balzac was really a "full" man in reading as well as thought; and of this reading fulness, the batch of books before us is perhaps the most striking example.

Louis Lambert appeared first (as *Notice Biographique sur*

L. L.) in 1832, in the *Nouveaux Contes Philosophiques;* then in February 1833 as a small volume by itself, a good deal enlarged, and entitled *Histoire intellectuelle de L. L.;* then, with its actual dimensions, in a collection entitled *Le Livre Mystique,* published by Werdet in 1835. In 1842, with *Séraphita,* but apparently (I have not seen the book) not with *Les Proscrits,* it was again published by Charpentier; and in 1846 it joined the *Comédie. Les Proscrits* first appeared in the *Revue de Paris* for May 1831, and was almost immediately included in the *Romans et Contes Philosophiques.* Its fortunes, after it was joined to its companions, have been told, as have those of *Séraphita.* This last appeared first in the *Revue de Paris* for June and July 1834. In 1840 it became an *Etude Philosophique* with *Les Proscrits, Gambara,* and *Massimilla Doni.* G. S.

In order to heighten the narrative tone of this volume, we append here two of Balzac's freshest short stories, though written—at any rate, published—about the same time. They belong to the *Marana* group, which includes some of the finest of the smaller efforts.

Maître Cornélius, which, by the way, is interesting in its dedication to Count Georges Mniszech, partakes of the character of a "Conte drolatique" thrown out of the scheme of those *Contes.* But it very worthily completes, in its own way, one of the most remarkable volumes of the old collection. This story first appeared in the *Revue de Paris* for December 1831.

L'Elixir de longue Vie, in which Balzac acknowledges (I do not know whether by trick or not) indebtedness to Hoff-

mann or somebody else, is also "style 1830," and, to speak with perfect frankness, would have been done much better by Mérimée or Gautier than by Balzac. But it is done well. There is an onward sweep and rush that is distinctly Balzacian. Nevertheless, at the end we want the touch of Hoffmann rather than that of Balzac; we find something that is not quite perfect, that wants another hand. Even as it is, we would not change for anything else, but we have the sense that the same thing by another person might have been still better. *L'Elixir de longue Vie* was published first in the *Revue de Paris,* October 1830.

SERAPHITA

To Madame Eveline de Hanska,
née Countess Rzewuska.

Madame,—Here is the work you desired of me; in dedicating it to you I am happy to offer you some token of the respectful affection you allow me to feel for you. If I should be accused of incapacity after trying to extract from the depths of mysticism this book, which demanded the glowing poetry of the East under the transparency of our beautiful language; the blame be yours! Did you not compel me to the effort—such an effort as Jacob's—by telling me that even the most imperfect outline of the figure dreamed of by you, as it has been by me from my infancy, would still be something in your eyes? Here, then, is that something.—Why cannot this book be set apart exclusively for those lofty spirits who, like you, are preserved from worldly pettiness by solitude! They might impress on it the melodious rhythm which it lacks, and which, in the hands of one of our poets, might have made it the glorious epic for which France still waits. Still, they will accept it from me as one of those balustrades, carved by some artist full of faith, on which the pilgrim leans to meditate on the end of man, while gazing at the choir of a fine church.

I remain, Madame, with respect, your faithful servant,

DE BALZAC.

PARIS, *August* 23, 1835.

I

SERAPHITUS

On seeing the Norwegian coast as outlined on the map, what imagination can fail to be amazed at its fantastic contour—long tongues of granite, round which the surges of the North Sea are for ever moaning? Who has not dreamed of the majestic spectacle of these beachless shores, these endless creeks, and inlets, and little bays, no two of which are alike, and each a pathless gulf? Would it not seem as though Nature had amused herself by representing, in an indestructible hieroglyphic, the symbol of life in Norway, by giving its coast the configuration of the bones of an enormous fish? For fishing is the staple of commerce, and almost the sole article of food to a handful of men who cling, like a tuft of lichen, to those barren rocks. On a land extending over fourteen degrees of longitude there are scarcely seven hundred thousand souls. Owing to the inglorious dangers and the perpetual snow that these Norwegian peaks offer to the traveler—the very name of Norway makes one cold—their sublime beauty remains inviolate and harmonizes with certain human phenomena, which took place there—equally unknown, at least to romance, and of which this is the story.

When one of these inlets, a mere fissure in the sight of the eider-ducks, is wide enough to prevent the sea from freezing over in the rocky prison it tosses and struggles in, the inhabitants call such a little gulf a fjord, a word which most geographers have tried to adopt into their respective languages. In spite of the general resemblance of all these channels, each has its own individuality; the sea penetrates into all these breaches, but in each the rocks are differently riven, and their contorted precipices defy the terms of geometry: here the crest is toothed like a saw; there its sides

are too perpendicular to allow the snow to rest on them, or the glorious clumps of northern pines to take root; further on, the convulsions of the globe have rounded off some soft declivity, a lovely valley furnished with stage on stage of dark-plumed trees. You feel inclined to call this land Marine Switzerland.

One of these gulfs, lying between Dronthjem and Christiania, is called Stromfiord. If the Stromfiord is not the most beautiful of these scenes, it has at least the merit of presenting the earthly magnificence of Norway, and of having been the background to the scenes of a really heavenly romance.

The general outline of the Stromfiord is, at a first glance, that of a funnel forced open by the sea. The entrance made by the waves is the record of a contest between the ocean and the granite, two equally powerful elements—one by its inertia, the other by its motion. The proof lies in some half-sunken rocks of fantastic shapes which prohibit the entrance of vessels. The hardy sons of the soil can in some places leap from rock to rock, undismayed by a gulf a hundred fathoms deep and six feet wide. Here and there a frail and ill-balanced block of gneiss, thrown across, joins two crags, or hunters or fishermen have flung some pine-trees, by way of a bridge, from one perpendicular cliff to another, where the sea murmurs unceasingly below.

This dangerous inlet turns to the right with a serpentine twist, where it meets a mountain rising three hundred fathoms above the surface of the sea, its foot forming a vertical shelf half a league in length, where the unyielding granite does not begin to split into rifts and inequalities till at about two hundred feet above the water. Thus the sea, rushing violently in, is no less violently driven back, by the resistant inertia of the mountain, towards the opposite shore, which the rebounding waves have worn into gentle indentations. The fiord is closed at the head by a cliff of gneiss, crowned with forest, whence a stream falls in cascades, forms a river when the snows melt, spreads into a lake of con-

siderable extent, and escapes with a rush, carrying down old pine-trees and ancient larches, hardly perceptible in the tumbling torrent. Flung by the fall to the bottom of the abyss, these trees presently come to the surface again, and combine in a tangle, forming islets which are stranded on the left bank, where the inhabitants of the little village built on the Stromfiord find them splintered, broken, sometimes entire, but always stripped of their leaves and branches.

The mountain, which thus receives at its feet the assaults of the sea, and on its head the buffeting of the north wind, is the Falberg. Its summit, always wrapped in a mantle of ice and snow, is the highest in Norway, where the vicinity of the Pole produces, at a level of eighteen hundred feet above the sea, such cold as prevails elsewhere on the highest mountains on the globe. The crest of this cliff, perpendicular on the side towards the sea, shelves gradually away to the east down to the falls of the Sieg, by a succession of slopes where the cold allows no vegetation but heath and much-enduring shrubs. That part of the fiord where the waters escape under the thick forest is called Siegdalen, or the valley of the Sieg—the name of the river.

The bay opposite to the cliffs of the Falberg is the valley of Jarvis—a pretty spot overlooked by hills covered with fir-trees, larches, and birch, with a few oaks and beeches, the thickest and most variously colored hangings Nature ever affords to this wild northern scenery. The eye can easily distinguish the line where the ground, warmed by the sun's rays, first admits of culture and shows the first signs of the Norwegian flora. At this part the gulf is wide enough to allow the waters flung back by the Falberg to die murmuring on the lowest ledge of the hills, where the strand is softly fringed with fine sand, mingled with mica, tiny crystals, and pretty pebbles of porphyry and many-colored marbles brought from Sweden by the river, with waifs from the sea, and shells and ocean weeds tossed up by storms from the Pole or from the South.

At the foot of the Jarvis hills is the village, consisting of

about two hundred wooden houses, inhabited by a population that live there, lost, like the swarms of bees in a forest, happily vegetating and extorting a living from the wilderness around them. The unrecognized existence of this village is easily explained. Few of its men were bold enough to venture out among the rocks to reach the open sea and attempt the fishing which the Norwegians carry on to a great extent on less dangerous parts of the coast. The various fish in the fiord partly supplies the food of the inhabitants; the pasture land in the valleys affords milk and butter; a few plots of good land allow them to reap a harvest of rye, of hemp, and vegetables, which they manage to protect against the bitter cold and the transient but terrible heat of the sun, showing true Norwegian ingenuity in this twofold conflict. The absence of communications, either by land, where roads are impracticable, or by sea, where only small boats can thread the watery labyrinths of the fiord, hinders them from acquiring wealth by the sale of their timber. It would cost an equally enormous sum to clear the channel at the entrance or to open up a road to the interior.

The roads from Christiania to Dronthjem all make a bend round the Stromfiord, crossing the Sieg by a bridge several leagues above the falls; the coast between the Jarvis valley and Dronthjem is covered with impenetrable forests, and the Falberg is divided from Christiania by inaccessible precipices. The village of Jarvis might perhaps have opened communications with Sweden by way of the Sieg, but to bring it into touch with civilization the Stromfiord needed a man of genius. The genius indeed came: a poet, a pious Swede, who died admiring and respecting the beauties of the land as being one of the grandest of the Creator's works.

Those of my readers who have been gifted by study with that "mind's eye," whose rapid perception can throw on the soul, as on a canvas, the most diverse landscapes of the world, may now readily conceive of the general aspect of the Stromfiord. They alone, perhaps, will be able to thread their tortuous way through the reef of the inlet where the sea

fights and foams; to glide on its swell below the shelves of the Falberg, whose white peaks mingle with the misty clouds of a sky that is almost constantly pearl-gray; to admire the dented margin of the pretty sheet of water; to hear the falls of the Sieg, which drops in long streamers on to a picturesque medley of large trees tossed in confusion, some upright, some hidden among boulders of gneiss; and at last to rest on the smiling pictures offered to the eye by the lower hills of Jarvis, whence rise the noblest products of the north in clumps, in myriads: here, birch-trees, as graceful as girls and, like them, gently stooping; there, pillared aisles of beech with centennial, mossy trunks; all the contrast of these various shades of green, of white clouds among black pine-trees, of heath-grown commons in every shade of purple—all the colors, all the fragrance, the unknown marvels, in short, of this vegetation.

Expand the proportions of this amphitheatre, soar up to the clouds, lose yourself in the caves of the rocks where the walruses hide, still your fancy will never be equal to the riches, the poetry of this Norwegian scene. For can your thought ever be as vast as the ocean that bounds the land, as fantastic as the strange forms assumed by the forests, as the clouds, the shadows, the changes of light?

Do you see now, above the meadows on the shore, on the furthest fold of the plain that undulates at the foot of the high hills of Jarvis, two or three hundred houses, roofed with *nœver,* a kind of thatch of birch bark; frail-looking dwellings, quite low, and suggesting silkworms flung there on a mulberry leaf brought by the wind? Above these humble and peaceful dwellings is a church, built with a simplicity that harmonizes with the poverty of the village. A graveyard lies round the chancel of this church; the parsonage is seen beyond. A little higher, on a knoll of the hillside, stands a dwelling, the only one built of stone, and for that reason called by the natives the Castle—the Swedish Castle.

In fact, a rich man had come from Sweden thirty years before this story opens and settled at Jarvis, trying to improve

its fortunes. This little mansion, erected with a view to tempting the inhabitants to build the like, was remarkable for its substantial character, for a garden wall—a rare thing in Norway, where, in spite of the abundance of stone, wood is used for all the fences, even for those that divide the fields. The house, thus protected from snow, stood on a mound in the midst of a vast courtyard. The windows were screened by those verandas of immense depth supported on large squared fir-trunks, which give Northern buildings a sort of patriarchal expression.

From under their shelter the savage bareness of the Falberg could easily be seen, and the infinitude of the open ocean be compared with the drop of water in the foam-flecked gulf; the portentous rush of the Sieg could be heard, though from afar the sheet of water looked motionless, where it threw itself into its granite bowl hedged in for three leagues round with vast glaciers—in short, the whole landscape where the scene is laid of the supernatural but simple events of this narrative.

The winter of 1799-1800 was one of the hardest in the memory of Europe; the Norway sea froze in every fiord, where the violence of the undertow commonly prevents the ice from forming. A wind, in its effects resembling the Spanish desert wind, had swept the ice of the Stromfiord by drifting the snow to the head of the gulf. It was long since the good folks of Jarvis had seen the vast mirror of the pool in winter reflecting the sky—a curious effect here in the heart of the hills whose curves were effaced under successive layers of snow, the sharpest peaks, like the deepest hollows, forming mere faint undulations under the immense sheet thrown by nature over the landscape now so dolefully dazzling and monotonous. The long hangings of the Sieg, suddenly frozen, described a vast arch, behind which the traveler might have walked sheltered from the storm if any one had been bold enough to venture across country. But the dangers of any expedition kept the boldest hunters within doors, fearing that they might fail to discern under the snow the narrow

paths traced along the edge of the precipices, the ravines, and the cliffs. Not a creature gave life to this white desert reigned over by the Polar blast, whose voice alone was sometimes though rarely heard.

The sky, always gray, gave the pool a hue of tarnished steel. Now and again an eider-duck might fly across with impunity, thanks to the thick down that shelters the dreams of the wealthy, who little know the dangers that purchase it; but the bird—like the solitary Bedouin who traverses the sands of Africa—was neither seen nor heard; in the torpid air, bereft of electric resonance, the rush of its wings was noiseless, its joyous cry unheard. What living eye could endure the sparkle of that precipice hung with glittering icicles, and the hard reflections from the snows, scarcely tinted on the peaks by the beams of the pallid sun which peeped out now and then like a dying thing anxious to prove that it still lives? Many a time, when the rack of gray clouds, driven in squadrons over the mountains and pine forests, hid the sky with their dense shroud, the earth, for lack of heavenly lights, had an illumination of its own.

Here, then, were met all the majestic attributes of the eternal cold that reigns at the Pole, of which the most striking is such royal silence as absolute monarchs dwell in. Every condition carried to excess has the appearance of negation, or the stamp of apparent death; is not life the conflict of two forces? Here nothing showed a sign of life. One force alone, the barren force of frost, reigned supreme. The beating of the open sea even did not penetrate to this silent hollow, so full of sound during the three brief months when nature hurriedly produces the uncertain harvest needful to support this patient race. A few tall fir-trees protruded their dark pyramids loaded with festoons of snow; and the droop of their boughs, bending under these heavy beards, gave a finishing touch to the mourning aspect of the heights, where they were seen as black points.

Every family clung to the fireside in a house carefully closed, with a store of biscuit, run butter, dried fish, and pro-

visions laid in to stand seven months of winter. Even the smoke of these dwellings was scarcely visible; they were all nearly buried in snow, of which the weight was broken by long planks starting from the roof, and supported at some distance from the walls on strong posts, thus forming a covered way round the house. During these dreadful winters the women weave and dye the stuffs of wool or linen of which the clothes are made; while the men for the most part read, or else lose themselves in those prodigious meditations which have given birth to the grand theories, the mystical dreams of the North, its beliefs and its studies—so thorough on certain points of science that they have probed to the core; a semi-monastic mode of life, which forces the soul back on itself, to feed on itself, and which makes the Norwegian peasant a being apart in the nations of Europe.

This, then, was the state of things on the Stromfiord in the first year of the nineteenth century, about the middle of the month of May.

One morning, when the sun was blazing down into the heart of this landscape, lighting up the flashes of the ephemeral diamonds produced by the crystallized surface of the snow and ice, two persons crossed the gulf and flew along the shelves of the Falberg, mounting towards the summit from ledge to ledge. Were they two human beings, or were they arrows? Any one who should have seen them would have taken them for two eiders soaring with one consent below the clouds. Not the most superstitious fisherman, not the most daring hunter, would have supposed that human creatures could have the power of pursuing a path along the faint lines traced on the granite sides, where this pair were, nevertheless, gliding along with the appalling skill of somnambulists, when, utterly unconscious of the laws of gravity and the perils of the least false step, they run along a roof, preserving their balance under the influence of an unknown power.

"Stop here, Seraphitus," said a pale girl, "and let me take breath. I would look only at you as we climbed the walls of

this abyss; if I had not, what would have become of me? But, at the same time, I am but a feeble creature. Do I tire you?"

"No," said the being on whose arm she leaned. "Let us go on, Minna; the spot where we are standing is not firm enough to remain on."

Once more the snow hissed off from the long boards attached to their feet, and they presently reached the first angular crag which chance had thrown out boldly from the face of the precipice. The person whom Minna had addressed as Seraphitus poised himself on his right heel to raise the lath of about six feet long, and as narrow as a child's shoe, which was fastened to his boot by two straps of walrus skin; this lath, about an inch thick, had a sole of reindeer skin, and the hair, pressed back against the snow, brought him to a full stop. By turning his left foot, on which this snow-shoe (or *ski*) was not less than twelve feet in length, he was able to turn nimbly round, he returned to his timid companion, lifted her up in spite of his awkward footgear, and set her down on a rocky seat, after dusting away the snow with his pelisse.

"You are safe here, Minna, and may tremble at your ease."

"We have already reached a third of the height of the Ice-cap," said she, looking at the peak, which she called by its popular Norwegian name. "I do not yet believe——"

But she was too much out of breath to talk: she smiled at Seraphitus, who, without replying, held her up, his hand on her heart, listening to its palpitations, as rapid as those of a startled fledgling.

"It often beats as fast as that when I have been running," said she.

Seraphitus bowed, without any contempt or coldness. In spite of the grace of this reply, which made it almost sweet, it nevertheless betrayed a reserve which in a woman would have been intoxicatingly provoking. Seraphitus clasped the girl to him, and Minna took the caress for an answer, and sat looking at him. As Seraphitus raised his head, tossing back

the golden locks of his hair with an almost impatient jerk, he saw happiness in his companion's eyes.

"Yes, Minna," said he, in a paternal tone that was peculiarly charming in a youth scarcely full grown, "look at me. Do not look down."

"Why?"

"Do you want to know?—Try then."

Minna gave one hasty glance at her feet, and cried out like a child that has met a tiger. The dreadful influence of the void had seized her, and one look had been enough to give it to her. The fiord, greedy of its prey, had a loud voice, stunning her by ringing in her ears, as though to swallow her up more surely by coming between her and life. From her hair to her feet, all down her back, ran a shudder, at first of cold; but then it seemed to fire her nerves with intolerable heat, throbbed in her veins, and made her limbs feel weak from electrical shocks, like those caused by touching the electrical eel. Too weak to resist, she felt herself drawn by some unknown force to the bottom of the cliff, where she fancied she could see a monster spouting venom, a monster whose magnetic eyes fascinated her, and whose yawning jaws crunched his prey by anticipation.

"I am dying, my Seraphitus, having loved no one but you," said she, mechanically moving to throw herself down.

Seraphitus blew softly on her brow and eyes. Suddenly, as a traveler is refreshed by a bath, Minna had forgotten that acute anguish; it had vanished under that soothing breath, which penetrated her frame and bathed it in balsamic effluence, as swiftly as the breath had passed through the air.

"Who and what are you?" said she, with an impulse of delicious alarm. "But I know.—You are my life.—How can you look down into the gulf without dying?" she asked after a pause.

Seraphitus left Minna clinging to the granite, and went as a shadow might have done to stand on the edge of the crag, his eyes sounding the bottom of the fiord, defying its bewildering depths; his figure did not sway, his brow was as white and calm as that of a marble statue—deep meeting deep.

"Seraphitus, if you love me, come back!" cried the girl. "Your danger brings back all my torments. Who—who are you to have such superhuman strength at your age?" she asked, feeling his arms around her once more.

"Why," said Seraphitus, "you can look into far vaster space without a qualm;" and raising his hand, the strange being pointed to the blue halo formed by the clouds round a clear opening just over their heads, in which they could see the stars, though it was daylight, in consequence of some atmospheric laws not yet fully explained.

"But what a difference!" she said, smiling.

"You are right," he replied; "we are born to aspire skywards. Our native home, like a mother's face, never frightens its children."

His voice found an echo in his companion's soul; she was silent.

"Come! let us go on," said he.

They rushed on together by the paths faintly visible along the mountain side, devouring the distance, flying from shelf to shelf, from ledge to ledge, with the swiftness of the Arab horse, that bird of the desert. In a few minutes they reached a green carpet of grass, moss, and flowers, on which no one yet had ever rested.

"What a pretty *sæter!*" cried Minna, giving the native name to this little meadow; "but how comes it here, so high up?"

"Here, indeed, the Norwegian vegetation ceases," said Seraphitus; "and if a few plants and flowers thrive on this spot, it is thanks to the shelter of the rock which protects them from the Polar cold.—Put this spray in your bosom, Minna," he went on, plucking a flower; "take this sweet creature on which no human eye has yet rested, and keep the unique blossom in memory of this day, unique in your life! You will never again find a guide to lead you to this *sæter.*"

He hastily gave her a hybrid plant which his eagle eye had discerned among the growth of *silene acaulis* and saxifrage, a real miracle developed under the breath of angels. Minna

seized it with childlike eagerness; a tuft of green, as transparent and vivid as an emerald, composed of tiny leaves curled into cones, light brown at the heart, shaded softly to green at the point, and cut into infinitely delicate teeth. These leaves were so closely set that they seemed to mingle in a dense mass of dainty rosettes. Here and there this cushion was studded with white stars edged with a line of gold, and from the heart of each grew a bunch of purple stamens without a pistil. A scent that seemed to combine that of the rose and of the orange-blossom, but wilder and more ethereal, gave a heavenly charm to this mysterious flower, at which Seraphitus gazed with melancholy, as though its perfume had expressed to him a plaintive thought, which he alone understood. To Minna this amazing blossom seemed a caprice of Nature, who had amused herself by endowing a handful of gems with the freshness, tenderness, and fragrance of a plant.

"Why should it be unique? Will it never reproduce its kind?" said she to Seraphitus, who colored and changed the subject.

"Let us sit down—turn round—look! At such a height you will perhaps not be frightened. The gulfs are so far below that you cannot measure their depth; they have the level perspective of the sea, the indefiniteness of the clouds, the hue of the sky. The ice in the fiord is an exquisite turquoise, the pine forests are visible only as dim brown streaks. To us the depths may well be thus disguised."

Seraphitus spoke these words with that unction of tone and gesture which is known only to those who have attained to the highest places on the mountains of the earth, and which is so involuntarily assumed that the most arrogant master finds himself prompted to treat his guide as a brother, and never feels himself the superior till they have descended into the valleys where men dwell.

He untied Minna's snow-shoes, kneeling at her feet. The girl did not notice it, so much was she amazed at the imposing spectacle of the Norwegian panorama—the long stretch of rocks lying before her at a glance, so much was she struck

by the perennial solemnity of those frozen summits, for which words have no expression.

"We have not come here by unaided human strength!" said she, clasping her hands. "I must be dreaming!"

"You call a fact supernatural, because you do not know its cause," he replied.

"Your answers are always stamped with some deep meaning," said she. "With you I understand everything without an effort.—Ah! I am free!"

"Your snow-shoes are off, that is all."

"Oh!" cried she, "and I would fain have untied yours, and have kissed your feet!"

"Keep those speeches for Wilfrid," said Seraphitus mildly.

"Wilfrid!" echoed Minna in a tone of fury, which died away as she looked at her companion. "You are never angry!" said she, trying, but in vain, to take his hand. "You are in all things so desperately perfect!"

"Whence you infer that I have no feelings?"

Minna was startled at a glance so penetratingly thrown into her mind.

"You prove to me that we understand each other," replied she, with the grace of a loving woman.

Seraphitus gently shook his head, with a flashing look that was at once sweet and sad.

"You who know everything," Minna went on, "tell me why the alarm I felt below, by your side, is dissipated now that I am up here; why I dare for the first time to look you in the face; whereas, down there, I scarce dare steal a glance at you?"

"Perhaps up here we have cast off the mean things of the earth," said he, pulling off his pelisse.

"I never saw you so beautiful," said Minna, sitting down on a mossy stone, and gazing in contemplation of the being who had thus brought her to a part of the mountain which from afar seemed inaccessible.

Never, in fact, had Seraphitus shone with such brilliant splendor—the only expression that can do justice to the eager-

ness of his face and the aspect of his person. Was this radiance due to the effulgence given to the complexion by the pure mountain air and the reflection from the snow? Was it the result of an internal impetus which still excites the frame at the moment it is resting after long exertion? Was it produced by the sudden contrast between the golden glow of sunshine and the gloom of the clouds through which this pretty pair had passed?

To all these causes we must perhaps add the effects of one of the most beautiful phenomena that human nature can offer. If some skilled physiologist had studied this being, who, to judge by the boldness of his brow and the light in his eyes at this moment, was a youth of seventeen; if he had sought the springs of this blooming life under the whitest skin that the North ever bestowed on one of its sons, he would, no doubt, have believed in the existence of a phosphoric fluid in the sinews that seemed to shine through the skin, or in the constant presence of an internal glow, which tinted Seraphitus as a light shines through an alabaster vase. Delicately slender as his hands were—he had taken off his gloves to loosen Minna's sandals—they seemed to have such strength as the Creator has given to the diaphanous joints of a crab. The fire that blazed in his eyes rivaled the rays of the sun; he seemed not to receive but to give out light. His frame, as slight and fragile as a woman's, was that of a nature feeble in appearance, but whose strength is always adequate to its desires, which are sometimes strong. Seraphitus, though of middle height, seemed taller as seen in front; he looked as if he fain would spring upwards. His hair, with its light curls, as if touched by a fairy hand and tossed by a breeze, added to the illusion produced by his airy attitude; but this absolutely effortless mien was the outcome rather of a mental state than of physical habit.

Minna's imagination seconded this constant hallucination; it would have affected any beholder, for it gave to Seraphitus the appearance of one of the beings we see in our happiest dreams. No familiar type can give any idea of this face, to

Minna so majestically manly, though in the sight of a man its feminine grace would have eclipsed the loveliest heads by Raphael. That Painter of Heaven has frequently given a sort of tranquil joy and tender suavity to the lines of his angelic beauties; but without seeing Seraphitus himself, what mind can conceive of the sadness mingled with hope which half clouded the ineffable feelings expressed in his features? Who could picture to himself, even in the artist's dream, where all things are possible, the shadows cast by mysterious awe on that too intellectual brow, which seemed to interrogate the skies, and always to pity the earth? That head could tower disdainful, like a noble bird of prey whose cries rend the air, or bow resigned, like the turtle-dove whose voice sheds tenderness in the depths of the silent forest.

Seraphitus had a complexion of surprising whiteness, made all the more remarkable by red lips, brown eyebrows, and silky lashes, the only details that broke the pallor of a face whose perfect regularity did not hinder the strong expression of his feelings; they were mirrored there without shock or violence, but with the natural, majestic gravity we like to attribute to superior beings. Everything in those monumental features spoke of strength and repose.

Minna stood up to take the young man's hand, hoping to draw him down to her so as to press on that fascinating brow a kiss of admiration rather than of love; but one look from his eyes, a look that went through her as a sunbeam goes through a glass prism, froze the poor child. She felt the gulf between them without understanding it; she turned away her head and wept. Suddenly a strong hand was round her waist, and a voice full of kindness said:

"Come."

She obeyed, resting her head in sudden relief on the young man's heart; while he, measuring his steps by hers in gentle and attentive conformity, led her to a spot whence they could behold the dazzling beauty of the Polar scenery.

"But before I look or listen, tell me, Seraphitus, why do you repulse me? Have I displeased you? And how? Tell me. I do

not want to call anything my own; I would that my earthly possessions should be yours, as the riches of my heart already are; that light should come to me only from your eyes, as my mind is dependent on yours; then I should have no fear of offending you, since I should but reflect the impulses of your soul, the words of your heart, the light of your light, as we send up to God the meditations by which He feeds our spirit.—I would be wholly you!"

"Well, Minna, a constant aspiration is a promise made by the future. Hope on!—Still, if you would be pure always, unite the thought of the Almighty to your earthly affections. Thus will you love all creatures, and your heart will soar high!"

"I will do whatever you desire," said she, looking up at him timidly.

"I cannot be your companion," said Seraphitus sadly.

He suppressed some reflections, raised his arms in the direction of Christiania, which was visible as a speck on the horizon, and said:

"Look!"

"We are indeed small," said she.

"Yes; but we become great by feeling and intellect," said Seraphitus. "The knowledge of things, Minna, begins with us; the little we know of the laws of the visible world enables us to conceive of the immensity of higher spheres. I know not whether the time is ripe for talking thus to you; but I so long to communicate to you the flame of my hopes! Some day, perhaps, we may meet in the world where love never dies."

"Why not now and for ever?" said she in a murmur.

"Here nothing is permanent!" said he in a tone of scorn. "The transient joys of earthly love are false lights which reveal to some souls the dawn of more durable bliss, just as the discovery of a law of nature enables certain privileged minds to deduct a whole system. Is not our perishable happiness here below an earnest of some other more perfect happiness, as the earth, a mere fragment of the universe, testifies

to the universe? We cannot measure the orbit of the Divine mind, of which we are but atoms as minute as God is great; but we may have our intuitions of its vastness, we may kneel, adore, and wait. Men are constantly mistaken in their science, not seeing that everything on their globe is relative and subordinate to a general cycle, an incessant productiveness which inevitably involves progress, and an aim. Man himself is not the final creation; if he were, God would not exist."

"How have you had time to learn so many things?" said the girl.

"They are memories," replied he.

"To me you are more beautiful than anything I see."

"We are one of the greatest works of God. Has He not bestowed on us the faculty of reflecting nature, concentrating it in ourselves by thought, and making it a stepping-stone from which to fly to Him? We love each other in proportion to what is heavenly in our souls.—But do not be unjust, Minna; look at the scene displayed at our feet; is it not grand? The ocean lies spread like a floor, the mountains are like the walls of an amphitheatre, the ether above is like the suspended velarium of the theatre, and we can inhale the mind of God as a perfume.

"Look! the storms that wreck vessels filled with men from hence appear like mere froth; if you look above you all is serene; we see a diadem of stars. The shades of earthly expression are here lost. Thus supported by nature so attenuated by space, do you not feel your mind to be deep rather than keen? Are you not conscious of more loftiness than enthusiasm, of more energy than will? Have you not feelings to which nothing within us can give utterance? Do you not feel your wings?—Let us pray!"

Seraphitus knelt, crossing his hands over his bosom, and Minna fell on her knees weeping. Thus they remained for some minutes, and for some minutes the blue halo that quivered in the sky above them spread, and rays of light fell round the unconscious pair.

"Why do you not weep when I cannot help it?" said Minna in a broken voice.

"Those who are pure in spirit shed no tears," replied Seraphitus, rising. "Why should I weep? I no longer see human misery. Here all is good and shines in majesty. Below I hear the supplications and the lament of the harp of suffering, sounding under the hands of the spirit held captive. Here I listen to the concert of harmonious harps. Below, you have hope, the beautiful rudiment of faith; but here faith reigns, the realization of hope!"

"You can never love me, I am too imperfect; you disdain me," said the girl.

"Minna, the violet hidden at the foot of the oak says to itself, 'The sun does not love me, he never comes.'—The sun says, 'If I fell on her, that poor little flower would perish!' Because he is the flower's friend he lets his beams steal through the oak-leaves, subduing them to tint the petals of the blossom he loves.—I feel I am not sufficiently shrouded, and fear lest you should see me too clearly; you would quail if you knew me too well. Listen; I have no taste for the fruits of the earth; I have understood your joys too well; like the debauched Emperors of Pagan Rome, I am disgusted with all things, for I have the gift of vision.—Leave me for ever," added Seraphitus sorrowfully.

He went away to sit down on a projecting rock, his head drooping on his breast.

"Why thus drive me to despair?" said Minna.

"Go from me!" cried Seraphitus; "I can give nothing that you want. Your love is too gross for me. Why do you not love Wilfrid? Wilfrid is a man, a man tested by passion, who will clasp you in his sinewy arms, and make you feel his broad, strong hand. He has fine black hair, eyes full of human feeling, a heart that fires the words of his lips with a lava torrent. He will crush you with caresses. He will be your lover, your husband. Go to Wilfrid!"

Minna was crying bitterly.

"Dare you tell me that you do not love him?" he added in a voice that pierced her like a dagger.

"Mercy! Mercy! My Seraphitus!"

"Love him, poor child of earth, to which fate irrevocably rivets you," said the terrible Seraphitus, seizing the girl with such force as dragged her to the brink of the *sæter,* whence the prospect was so extensive that a young creature full of enthusiasm might easily fancy that she was above the world. "I wanted a companion to go with me to the realm of light; I thought to show her this ball of clay, and I find you still cling to it. Adieu! Remain as you are, enjoy through your senses, obey your nature; turn pale with pale men, blush with women, play with children, pray with sinners, look up to heaven when you are stricken; tremble, hope, yearn; you will have a comrade, you still may laugh and weep, give and receive.—For me—I am an exile far from heaven; like a monster, far from earth! My heart beats for none; I live in myself, for myself alone. I feel through my spirit, I breathe by my brain, I see by my mind, I am dying of impatience and longing. No one here below can satisfy my wishes or soothe my eagerness; and I have forgotten how to weep. I am alone. —I am resigned, and can wait."

Seraphitus looked at the flowery knoll on which he had placed Minna, and then turned towards the frowning summits, round whose peaks heavy clouds had gathered, into which he seemed to fling his next thoughts.

"Do you hear that delightful music, Minna?" said he, in his dove-like tones, for the eagle had ended his cry. "Might one not fancy that it was the harmony of those Eolian harps which poets imagine in the midst of forests and mountains? Do you see the shadowy forms moving among those clouds? Do you discern the winged feet of those who deck the sky with such hangings? Those sounds refresh the soul; Heaven will ere long shed the blossoms of spring, a flash blazes up from the Pole. Let us fly—it is time!"

In an instant they had replaced their snow-shoes and were descending the Falberg by the steep slopes down to the valley of the Sieg. Some miraculous intelligence guided their steps —or rather their flight. When a crevasse covered with snow lay before them, Seraphitus seized Minna, and with a swift

rush dashed, scarce the weight of a bird, across the frail bridge that covered a chasm. Many a time, by just pushing his companion, he deviated slightly to avoid a cliff or tree, a block of stone which he seemed to see through the snow, as certain mariners, accustomed to the sea, discern a shoal by the color, the eddy, and the recoil of the water.

When they had reached the roads of the Siegdahl, and they could proceed without hesitation in a straight line down to the ice on the fiord, Seraphitus spoke.

"You have nothing more to say to me?" he asked Minna.

"I fancied," replied the girl respectfully, "that you wished to think in silence."

"Make haste, pretty one, the night is falling," said he.

Minna was startled at hearing the new voice, so to speak, in which her guide spoke. A voice as clear as a girl's, dissipating the fantastic flashes of the dream in which she had been walking. Seraphitus was abdicating his manly strength, and his looks were losing their too keen insight. Presently the fair couple were gliding across the fiord; they reached the snowy level that lay between the margin of the bay and the first houses of Jarvis; then, urged by the waning light, they hurried up to the parsonage as if climbing the steps of an enormous stairway.

"My father will be uneasy," said Minna.

"No," said Seraphitus.

At this moment they stopped at the porch of the humble dwelling where Pastor Becker, the minister of Jarvis, sat reading while awaiting his daughter's return to supper.

"Dear Pastor Becker," said Seraphitus, "I have brought your daughter back safe and sound."

"Thank you, mademoiselle," said the old man, laying his spectacles on the book. "You must be tired."

"Not in the least," said Minna, on whose brow her companion had just breathed.

"Dear child, will you come to tea with me the evening after to-morrow?"

"With pleasure, dear."

"Pastor Becker, will you bring her?"

"Yes, mademoiselle."

Seraphitus nodded prettily, bowed to the old man, and left, and in a few minutes was in the courtyard of the Swedish Castle. An old servant of eighty came out under the wide veranda carrying a lantern. Seraphitus slipped off the snow-shoes with the grace of a woman, ran into the sitting-room, dropped on to a large divan covered with skins, and lay down.

"What will you take?" said the old man, lighting the enormously long tapers that are used in Norway.

"Nothing, David; I am too tired."

Seraphitus threw off the sable-lined pelisse, wrapped it about him, and was asleep. The old servant lingered a few mintues in loving contemplation of the strange being resting under his gaze, and whose sex the most learned man would have been puzzled to pronounce on. Seeing him as he lay, wrapped in his usual garment, which was as much like a woman's dressing-gown as a man's overcoat, it was impossible to believe that the slender feet that hung down, as if to display the delicacy with which nature had moulded them, were not those of a young girl; but the brow, the profile, seemed the embodiment of human strength carried to its highest pitch.

"She is suffering, and will not tell me," thought the old man. "She is dying like a flower scorched by too fierce a sunbeam."

And the old man wept.

II.

SERAPHITA.

In the course of the evening David came into the drawing-room.

"I know who is coming," said Seraphita in a sleepy voice. "Wilfrid may come in."

On hearing these words, a man at once appeared, and came to sit down by her.

"My dear Seraphita, are you ill? You look paler than usual."

She turned languidly towards him, after tossing back her hair like a pretty woman overpowered by sick headache and too feeble to complain.

"I was foolish enough," said she, "to cross the fiord with Minna; we have been up the Falberg."

"Did you want to kill yourself?" cried he, with a lover's alarm.

"Do not be uneasy, my good Wilfrid, I took great care of your Minna."

Wilfrid struck the table violently with his hand, took a few steps towards the door with an exclamation of pain; then he came back and began to reproach her.

"Why so much noise if you suppose me to be suffering?" said Seraphita.

"I beg your pardon, forgive me," said he, kneeling down. "Speak harshly to me, require anything of me that your cruel woman's caprice may suggest to you as hardest to be endured, but, my beloved, do not doubt my love! You use Minna like a hatchet to hit me with again and again. Have some mercy!"

"Why speak thus, my friend, when you know that such words are useless?" she replied, looking at him with a gaze that became at last so soft that what Wilfrid saw was not Seraphita's eyes, but a fluid light shimmering like the last vibrations of a song full of Italian languor.

"Ah! anguish cannot kill!" cried he.

"Are you in pain?" said she, in a voice which produced on him the same effect as her look. "What can I do for you?"

"Love me, as I love you!"

"Poor Minna!" said she.

"I never bring any weapons!" cried Wilfrid.

"You are in a detestable temper," said Seraphita, smiling. "Have I not spoken nicely, like the Parisian ladies of whom you tell me love stories?"

Wilfrid sat down, folded his arms, and looked gloomily at Seraphita.

"I forgive you," said he, "for you know not what you do."

"Oh!" retorted she, "every woman from Eve downwards knows when she is doing good or evil."

"I believe it," said he.

"I am sure of it, Wilfrid. Our intuition is just what makes us so perfect. What you men have to learn, we feel."

"Why, then, do you not feel how much I love you?"

"Because you do not love me."

"Great God!"

"Why then do you complain of anguish?"

"You are terrible this evening, Seraphita. You are a perfect demon!"

"No; but I have the gift of understanding, and that is terrifying. Suffering, Wilfrid, is a light thrown on life."

"Why did you go up the Falberg?"

"Minna will tell you; I am too tired to speak. You must talk, you who know everything, who have learned everything and forgotten nothing, and have gone through so many social experiences. Amuse me; I am listening."

"What can I tell you that you do not know! Indeed, your request is a mockery. You recognize nothing that is worldly, you analyze its terminology, you demolish its laws, its manners, feelings, sciences, by reducing them to the proportions they assume when we take our stand outside the globe."

"You see, my friend, I am not a woman. You are wrong to love me. What! I quit the ethereal regions of strength you attribute to me; I make myself humble and insignificant to stoop after the manner of the poor female of every species —and you at once uplift me! Then, when I am crushed and broken, I crave your help; I want your arm, and you repulse me! We do not understand each other."

"You are more malignant this evening than I have ever known you."

"Malignant?" said she, with a flashing look that melted every sentiment into one heavenly emotion. "No; I am weary, that is all. Then, leave me, my friend. Will not that be a due exercise of your rights as a man? We are always to

charm you, to recreate you, always to be cheerful, and have no whims but those that amuse you.—What shall I do, my friend? Shall I sing, or dance, when fatigue has deprived me of voice and of the use of my legs? Yes, gentlemen, at our last gasp we still must smile on you! That, I believe, you call your sovereignty!—Poor women! I pity them. You abandon them when they are old; tell me, have they then no longer heart or soul? Well, and I am more than a hundred, Wilfrid Go—go to kneel at Minna's feet."

"Oh, my one, eternal love!"

"Do you know what eternity is? Be silent, Wilfrid.—You desire me, but you do not love me.—Tell me, now, do not I remind you of some coquette you have met?"

"I certainly do not see you now as the pure and heavenly maiden I saw for the first time in the church at Jarvis."

As he spoke Seraphita passed her hands over her brow, and when she uncovered her face Wilfrid was astonished at the religious and saintly expression it wore.

"You are right, my friend. I am always wrong to set foot on your earth."

"Yes, beloved Seraphita, be my star.—Never descend from the place whence you shed such glorious light on me."

He put out his hand to take the girl's, but she withdrew it, though without disdain or anger. Wilfrid hastily rose and went to stand by the window, turning towards it so that Seraphita should not see a few tears that filled his eyes.

"Why these tears?" she asked. "You are no longer a boy, Wilfrid. Come back to me, I insist.—You are vexed with me, when it is I who should be angry. You see I am not well, and you compel me by some foolish doubts to think and speak, or participate in whims and ideas that fatigue me. If you at all understood my nature, you would have given me some music; you would have soothed my weariness; but you love me for your own sake, not for myself."

The storm which raged in Wilfrid's soul was stilled by these words; he came back slowly to contemplate the bewitching creature who reclined under his eyes, softly pillowed,

her head resting on her hand, and her elbow in an insinuating attitude.

"You fancy I do not like you," she went on. "You are mistaken. Listen, Wilfrid. You are beginning to know a great deal, and you have suffered much. Allow me to explain your thoughts. You wanted to take my hand."

She sat up, and her graceful movement seemed to shed gleams of light.

"Does not a girl who allows a man to take her hand make a promise, and ought she not to keep it? You know full well that I can never be yours. Two feelings rule the love that attracts the women of this earth: either they devote themselves to suffering creatures, degraded and guilty, whom they desire to comfort, to raise, to redeem; or they give themselves wholly to superior beings, sublime and strong, whom they are fain to worship and understand—by whom they are too often crushed. You have been degraded, but you have purified yourself in the fires of repentance, and you now are great; I feel myself too small to be your equal, and I am too religious to humble myself to any power but that of the Most High. Your life, my friend, may thus be stated; we are in the North, among the clouds, where abstractions are familiar to our minds."

"Seraphita, you kill me when you talk so," he replied. "It is always torture to me to see you thus apply the monstrous science which strips all human things of the properties they derive from time, space, form, when you regard them mathematically under some ultimate simplest expression, as geometry does with bodies, abstracting dimensions from substance."

"Well, Wilfrid, I submit.—Look at this bearskin rug which my poor David has spread. What do you think of it?"

"I like it very well."

"You did not know I had that *Doucha Greka?*"

It was a sort of pelisse made of cashmere lined with black fox-skin; the name means, "warm to the soul."

"Do you suppose," said she, "that any sovereign in any court possesses a fur wrap to match it?"

"It is worthy of her who wears it!"

"And whom you think very beautiful?"

"Human words are inapplicable to her; she must be addressed heart to heart."

"Wilfrid, it is kind of you to soothe my griefs with such sweet words—which you have spoken to others."

"Good-bye."

"Stay. I love you truly, and Minna too, believe me, but to me you two are one being. Thus combined you are as a brother, or, if you will, a sister to me. Marry each other, let me see you happy before quitting for ever this sphere of trial and sorrow. Dear me! the most ordinary women have made their lovers obey their will. They have said 'Be silent!' and their lovers were mute. They have said 'Die!' and men have died. They have said 'Love me from afar!' the lovers have remained at a distance like courtiers in the presence of a king. They have said 'Go, marry!' and the men have married. Now, I want you to be happy, and you refuse. Have I then no power?—Well, Wilfrid—come close to me—Yes, I should be sorry to see you married to Minna; but when you see me no more, then—promise me to make her your wife. Heaven intends you for each other."

"I have heard you with rapture, Seraphita. Incomprehensible as your words are, they are like a charm. But what, indeed, do you mean?"

"To be sure: I forget to be foolish, to be the poor creature in whose weakness you delight. I torture you, and you came to this wild country to find rest—you who are racked by the fierce throes of misunderstood genius, worn out by the patient labors of science, who have almost stained your hands by crime, and worn the chains of human justice."

Wilfrid had fallen half dead on the floor. Seraphita breathed on the young man's brow, and he fell calmly asleep, lying at her feet.

"Sleep, rest," said she, rising.

After laying her hands on Wilfrid's forehead, the following phrases fell from her lips, one by one, each in a different tone,

but alike melodious and full of a kindly spirit that seemed to emanate from her countenance in misty undulations like the light shed by the heathen goddess on the beloved shepherd in his sleep.

"I may show myself to you, dear Wilfrid, as I am, to you who are strong.

"The hour is come, the hour when the shining lights of the future cast their reflections on the soul, the hour when the soul moves, feeling itself free.

"It is granted to me now to tell you how well I love you. Do you not see what my love is, a love devoid of self-interest, a feeling full of you alone, a love which follows you into the future, to light up your future, for such love is the true light. Do you now perceive how ardently I long to see you released from the life that is a burden to you, and nearer to the world where love rules for ever? Is not love for a lifetime only sheer suffering? Have you not felt a longing for eternal love? Do you not now understand to what ecstasy a being can rise when he is double through loving Him who never betrays his love, Him before whom all bow and worship!

"I would I had wings, Wilfrid, to cover you withal: I would I had strength to give you that you might know the foretaste of the world where the purest joys of the purest union known on earth would cast a shadow in the light that there perennially enlightens and rejoices all hearts!

"Forgive a friendly soul for having shown you in one word a vision of your faults with the charitable intention of lulling the acute torments of your remorse. Listen to the choir of forgiveness! Refresh your spirit by inhaling the dawn that shall rise for you beyond the gloom of death! Yes, for your life lies there.

"My words shall wear for you the glorious garb of dreams, and appear as forms of flame descending to visit you. Rise! Rise to the heights whence men see each other truly, though tiny and crowded as the sands of the seashore. Humanity is unrolled before you as a ribbon; look at the endless hues of that flower of the gardens of Heaven.—Do you see those who

lack intelligence, those who are beginning to be tinged by it, those who have been tried, those who are in the circle of love, and those in wisdom, who aspire to celestial illumination?

"Do you understand, through these thoughts made visible, the destination of man—whence he comes, whither he is tending? Keep on your road. When you shall reach your journey's end, you will hear the trumpet call of omnipotence and loud shouts of victory, and harmonies, only one of which would shake the earth, but which are lost in a world where there is neither East nor West.

"Do you perceive, dear, much-tried one, that but for the torpor and the veil of sleep, such visions would rend and carry away your intellect, as the wind of a tempest rends and sweeps away a light sail, and would rob a man for ever of his reason? Do you perceive that the soul alone, raised to its highest power, and even in a dream, can scarce endure the consuming effluence of the Spirit?

"Fly, fly again through the realms of light and glory, admire, hurry on. As you fly you are resting, you go forward without fatigue. Like all men, you would fain dwell always thus bathed in these floods of fragrance and light, where you are wandering free of your unconscious body, speaking in thought only. Hurry, fly, rejoice for a moment in the wings you will have earned when love is so perfect in you that you shall cease to have any senses, that you shall be all intellect and all love! The higher you soar, the less can you conceive of the gulf beneath.—Now, gaze at me for a moment, for you will henceforth see me but darkly, as you behold me by the light of the dull sun of the earth!"

Seraphita stole up with her head gently bent on one side, her hair flowing about her in the airy pose which the sublimest painters have attributed to messengers from heaven: the folds of her dress had the indescribable grace which make the artist, the man to whom everything is an expression of feeling, stop to gaze at the exquisite flowing veil of the antique statue of Polyhymnia.

Then she extended her hand and Wilfrid rose.

When he looked at Seraphita, the fair girl was lying on the bearskin, her head resting on her hand, her face calm, her eyes shining. Wilfrid gazed at her in silence, but his features expressed respectful awe, and he looked at her timidly.

"Yes, dear one," said he at last, as if answering a question, "whole worlds divide us! I submit; I can only adore you. But what is to become of me thus lonely?"

"Wilfrid, have you not your Minna?"

He hung his head.

"Oh, do not be so scornful! a woman can understand everything by love. When she fails to understand, she feels; when she cannot feel, she sees; when she can neither see, nor feel, nor understand—well, that angel of earth divines your need, to protect you and to hide her protection under the grace of love."

"Seraphita, am I worthy to love a woman?"

"You are suddenly grown very modest! Is this a snare? A woman is always so much touched to find her weakness glorified!—Well, the evening after to-morrow, come to tea. You will find our good Pastor Becker, and you will see Minna, the most guileless creature I ever knew in this world.—Now leave me, my friend; I must say long prayers this evening in expiation of my sins."

"How can you sin?"

"My poor, dear friend, is not the abuse of power the sin of pride? I have been, I think, too arrogant to-day.—Now go. Till to-morrow."

"Till to-morrow!" Wilfrid feebly echoed, with a long look at the being of whom he desired to carry away an indelible memory.

Though he meant to leave, he remained standing for some moments outside, looking at the lights that beamed from the windows of the Swedish castle.

"What was it that I saw?" he asked himself. "No, it was not a single being, but a whole creation. I retain, of that world seen through veils and mists, a ringing echo like the

remembrance of departed pain, or like the dizziness caused by dreams in which we hear the moaning of past generations mingling with the harmonious voices of higher spheres, where all is light and love. Am I awake? Do I still slumber? Have I not yet opened my sleeping eyes, those eyes before whose sight luminous spaces stretch into infinitude, eyes that can discern those spaces?—In spite of the night and the cold, my head is still on fire. I will go to the manse. Between the pastor and his daughter I may recover my balance."

But he did not yet leave the spot whence he could see into Seraphita's sitting-room. This mysterious being seemed to be the radiant centre of a circle which formed an atmosphere about her rarer than that which surrounds others: he who came within it found himself involved in a vortex of light and of consuming thoughts. Wilfrid, obliged to struggle against this inexplicable force, did not triumph without considerable efforts; but when he had got out of the precincts of the house, he recovered his freedom of will, walked quickly to the parsonage, and presently found himself under the lofty wooden porch that served as an entrance hall to Pastor Becker's house. He pushed open the first door, packed with birch bark, against which the snow had drifted, and knocked eagerly at the inner door, saying:

"Will you allow me to spend the evening with you, Pastor Becker?"

"Yes," was the answer in two voices speaking as one.

On entering the parlor, Wilfrid was gradually brought back to real life. He bowed very cordially to Minna, shook hands with the minister, and then looked about him on a scene which soothed the excitement of his physical nature, in which a process was going on resembling that which sometimes takes place in men accustomed to long contemplation When some powerful conception carries away a man of science or a poet on its chimera-like wings, and isolates him from the external surroundings that hedge him in on earth, soaring with him through those boundless regions where vast masses of fact appear as abstractions and the most stupendous works

of nature seem but images, woe to him if some sudden noise rouses his senses and recalls his wandering soul to its prison of bone and flesh! The collision of the two powers: body and spirit, one of which has something of the invisible element of lightning; while the other, like all tangible forms, has a certain soft resistancy which for the moment defies destruction—this collision, or, to be accurate, this terrible reunion, gives rise to unspeakable suffering. The body has cried out for the fire that consumes it, and the flame has recaptured its prey. But this fusion cannot take place without the ebullition, the crepitation and convulsions, of which chemistry affords visible examples when two hostile elements are sundered that have been joined by its act.

For some days past, whenever Wilfrid went to Seraphita's house, his body there fell into an abyss. By a single look this wonderful creature translated him in the spirit to the sphere whither meditation carries the learned, whither prayer transports the pious soul, whither his eye can carry the artist, and sleep can waft some dreamers; for each there is a call bidding him to that empyrean void, for each a guide to lead him there—for all there is anguish in the return. There alone is the veil rent, there alone is Revelation seen without disguise—an ardent and awful disclosure of the unknown sphere of which the soul brings back nought but fragments. To Wilfrid, an hour spent with Seraphita was often like the dream so dear to the opium eater, in which each nerve-fibre becomes the focus of radiating rapture. He came away exhausted, like a girl who should try to keep up with the pace of a giant.

The sharp, punishing cold began to subdue the agony of trepidation caused by the re-amalgamation of the two elements in his nature thus violently wrenched asunder; then he always made his way to the manse, attracted to Minna by his thirst for the scenes of homely life, as an European traveler thirsts for his native land when homesickness seizes him in the midst of the fairy splendors that tempted him to the East.

At this moment the visitor, more exhausted than he had ever been before, dropped into a chair and looked about him for some minutes, like a man aroused from sleep. Pastor Becker and his daughter, accustomed no doubt to their guest's eccentricity, went on with their occupations.

The room was decorated with a collection of Norwegian insects and shells. These curiosities, ingeniously arranged on the background of yellow pinewood with which the wall was wainscoted, formed a colored ornamentation to which tobacco smoke had imparted a soberer tone. At the further end, opposite the door, was an enormous wrought-iron stove, carefully rubbed by the maid-servant till it shone like polished steel.

Pastor Becker was seated in a large armchair, covered with worsted work, near the stove and in front of a table, his feet in a foot-muff, while he read from a folio supported on other books to form a sort of desk. On his right stood a beer-jug and a glass; on his left a smoky lamp fed with fish oil. The minister was a man of about sixty years; his face of the type so often painted by Rembrandt: the small, keen eyes set in circles of fine wrinkles under thick grizzled brows; white hair falling in two silky locks from beneath a black velvet cap; a broad, bald forehead, and the shape of face which a heavy chin made almost square, and, added to this, the self-possessed calm that betrays to the observer some conscious power—the sovereignty conferred by wealth, by the judical authority of the burgomaster, by the conviction of Art, or the stolid tenacity of happy ignorance. The handsome old man, whose substantial build revealed sound health, was wrapped in a dressing-gown of rough cloth with no ornament but the binding. He gravely held a long meerschaum pipe in his mouth, blowing off the tobacco smoke at regular intervals, and watching its fantastic spirals with a speculative eye, while endeavoring, no doubt, to assimilate and digest by meditation the ideas of the author whose works he was studying.

On the other side of the stove, near the door that led into

the kitchen, Minna was dimly visible through the fog of smoke, to which she seemed to be inured. In front of her, on a small table, were the various implements of a needlewoman; a pile of towels and stockings to be mended, and a lamp like that which shone on the white pages of the book in which her father seemed to be absorbed. Her fresh, young face, delicately pure in outline, harmonized with the innocence that shone on her white brow and in her bright eyes. She sat forward on her chair, leaning a little towards the light to see the better, unconsciously showing the grace of her figure. She was already dressed for the evening in a white calico wrapper; a plain, cambric cap, with no ornament but its frill, covered her hair. Though lost in some secret meditation, she counted without mistake the threads in the towel, or the stitches in her stocking. Thus she presented the most complete and typical image of woman born to earthly duties, whose eye might pierce the clouds of the sanctuary, while a mind at once humble and charitable kept her on the level of man. Wilfrid, from his armchair between the two tables, contemplated the harmonious picture with a sort of rapture; the clouds of smoke were not out of keeping.

The single window which gave light to the room in the summer was now carefully closed. For a curtain, an old piece of tapestry hung from a rod in heavy folds. There was no attempt at the picturesque or showy—austere simplicity, genuine homeliness, the unpretentiousness of nature, all the habits of domestic life free from troubles and anxieties. Many dwellings leave the impression of a dream; the dazzling flash of transient pleasure seems to hide a ruin under the chill smile of luxury; but this parlor was sublimely real, harmonious in color, and apt to suggest patriarchal ideas of a busy and devout life.

The silence was broken only by the heavy step of the maid preparing the supper, and by the singing in the pan of the dried fish she was frying in salt butter, after the fashion of the country.

"Will you smoke a pipe?" said the pastor presently, when he thought that Wilfrid would heed him.

"No, thank you, dear Pastor Becker," he replied.

"You seem less well than usual this evening," said Minna, struck by the visitor's weak voice.

"I am always so when I have been to the castle."

Minna was startled.

"A strange creature dwells there, Pastor Becker," he went on after a pause. "I have been six months in the village, and have never dared to question you about her; and to-night I have to do violence to my feelings even to speak of her. At first I greatly regretted to find my travels interrupted by the winter, and to be obliged to remain here; for the last two months, however, the chains binding me to Jarvis have been more closely riveted, and I fear I may end my days here.—You know how I first met Seraphita, and the impression made on me by her eyes and her voice, and how at last I was admitted to visit her though she receives nobody. On the very first day, I came to you for information concerning that mysterious creature. Then began for me the series of enchantments——"

"Of enchantments?" exclaimed the pastor, shaking out the ashes of his pipe into a coarse pan of sand that served him as a spittoon. "Are enchantments possible?"

"You, certainly, who at this very moment are so conscientiously studying Jean Wier's book of *Incantations,* will understand the account I can give you of my sensations," Wilfrid replied quickly. "If we study nature attentively, alike in its great revolutions and in its minutest works, it is impossible not to admit the possibility of enchantment—giving the word its fullest meaning. Man can create no force; he can but use the only existing force, which includes all others, namely, Motion—the incomprehensible Breath of the Sovereign Maker of the Universe. The elements are too completely separated for the hand of man to combine them; the only miracle he can work consists in the mingling of two hostile substances. Even so, gunpowder is akin to thunder!

"As to effecting an act of creation, and that suddenly!—All creation needs time, and time will neither hurry nor turn backwards at our bidding. Hence, outside us, plastic nature obeys laws whose order and procedure cannot be reversed by any human effort.

"But after conceding this to mere matter, it would be unreasonable to deny the existence, within us, of a vast power, of which the effects are so infinitely various that past generations have not yet completely classified them. I will say nothing of man's faculty of abstracting his mind, of comprehending nature in the limits of speech, a stupendous fact, of which common minds think no more than they think out the act of motion, but which led Indian Theosophists to speak of creation by the Word, to which they also attributed the contrary power. The tiniest item of their daily food—a grain of rice, whence proceeds a whole creature, which presently results in a grain of rice again—afforded them so complete a symbol of the creative Word and the synthetical Word, that it seemed a simple matter to apply the system to the creation of worlds.

"Most men would do well to be content with the grain of rice that lies at the origin of every genesis. Saint John, when he said that the Word was in God, only complicated the difficulty.

"But the fruition, the germination, and the blossoming of our ideas is but a trifle if we compare this property, which is distributed among so many men, with the wholly personal faculty of communicating it to certain more or less efficient forces by means of concentration, and thus raising it to the third, ninth, or twenty-seventh power, giving it a hold on masses, and obtaining magical results by concentrating the action of Nature. What I call enchantments are the stupendous dramas played out between two membranes on the canvas of the brain. In the unexplored realms of the spiritual world we meet with certain beings armed with these astounding faculties—comparable only to the terrible powers of gases in the physical world—beings who can combine with other

beings, can enter into them as an active cause, and work magic in them, against which their hapless victims are defenceless; they cast a spell on them, override them, reduce them to wretched serfdom, and crush them with the weight and magnificent sway of a superior nature; acting, now like the gymnotus which electrifies and numbs the fisherman; now, again, like a dose of phosphorus which intensifies the sense of life or hastens its projection; sometimes like opium, which lulls corporeal nature, frees the spirit from its bondage, sends it soaring above the world, shows it the universe through a prism, and extracts for it the nourishment that best pleases it; and sometimes like catalepsy, which annuls every faculty to enhance a single vision.

"Miracles, spells, incantations, witchcrafts, in short all the facts that are incorrectly called supernatural, can only be possible and accounted for by the authority with which some other mind compels us to accept the effects of a mysterious law of optics which magnifies, or diminishes, or exalts creation, enables it to move within us independently of our will, distorts or embellishes it, snatches us up to heaven, or plunges us into hell—the two terms by which we express the excess of rapture or of pain. These phenomena are within us, not outside us.

"The being we call Seraphita seems to me to be one of those rare and awe-inspiring spirits to whom it is given to constrain men, to coerce nature, and share the occult powers of God. The course of her enchantments on me began by her compelling me to silence. Every time I dared wish to question you about her, it seemed to me that I was about to reveal a secret of which I was bound to be the impeccable guardian; whenever I was about to speak, a burning seal was set on my lips, and I was the involuntary slave of this mysterious prohibition. You see me now, for the hundredth time, crushed, broken, by having played with the world of hallucinations that dwells in that young thing, to you so gentle and frail, to me the most ruthless magician. Yes—to me she is a sorceress who bears in her right hand an invisible in-

strument to stir the world with, and in her left the thunderbolt that dissolves everything at her command. In short, I can no longer behold her face; it is unendurably dazzling.

"I have for the last few days been wandering round this abyss of madness too helplessly to keep silence any longer. I have, therefore, seized a moment when I find courage enough to resist the monster that drags me to her presence without asking whether I have strength enough to keep up with his flight.—Who is she? Did you know her as a child? Was she ever born? Had she parents? Was she conceived by the union of sun and ice?—She freezes and she burns; she comes forth and then vanishes like some coy truth; she attracts and repels me; she alternately kills and vivifies me; I love her and I hate her!—I cannot live thus. I must be either in heaven altogether, or in hell."

Pastor Becker, his refilled pipe in one hand and in the other the stopper, listened to Wilfrid with a mysterious expression, glancing occasionally at his daughter, who seemed to understand this speech, in harmony with the being it referred to. Wilfrid was as splendid as Hamlet struggling against his father's ghost, to whom he speaks when it rises visible to him alone amid the living.

"This is very much the tone of a man in love," said the good man simply.

"In love!" cried Wilfrid, "yes, to ordinary apprehensions; but, my dear Mr. Becker, no words can describe the frenzy with which I rush to meet this wild creature."

"Then you do love her?" said Minna reproachfully.

"Mademoiselle, I endure such strange agitation when I see her, and such deep dejection when I see her not, that in any other man they would be symptoms of love; but love draws two beings ardently together, while between her and me a mysterious gulf constantly yawns, which chills me through when I am in her presence, but of which I cease to be conscious when we are apart. I leave her each time in greater despair; I return each time with greater ardor, like a scientific inquirer seeking for Nature's secrets and for ever baffled;

like a painter who yearns to give life to his canvas, and wrecks himself and every resource of art in the futile attempt."

"Yes, that strikes me as very true," said the girl.

"How should you know, Minna?" asked the old man.

"Ah! father, if you had been with us this morning to the summit of the Falberg, and had seen her praying, you would not ask me. You would say, as Wilfrid did the first time he saw her in our place of worship, 'She is the Spirit of Prayer!'"

A few moments of silence ensued.

"It is true!" cried Wilfrid. "She has nothing in common with the creatures who writhe in the pits of this world."

"On the Falberg!" the old pastor exclaimed. "How did you manage to get there?"

"I do not know," said Minna. "The expedition is to me now like a dream of which only the remembrance survives. I should not believe in it, perhaps, but for this substantial proof."

She drew the flower from her bosom and showed it to him. They all three fixed their eyes on the pretty saxifrage, still quite fresh, which under the gleam of the lamps shone amid the clouds of smoke like another light.

"This is supernatural," said the old man, seeing a flower in bloom in the winter.

"An abyss!" cried Wilfrid, fevered by the perfume.

"The flower fills me with rapture," said Minna. "I fancy I can still hear his speech, which is the music of the mind, as I still see the light of his gaze, which is love."

"Let me entreat you, my dear Pastor Becker, to relate the life of Seraphita—that enigmatical flower of humanity whose image I see in this mysterious blossom."

"My dear guest," said the minister, blowing a puff of tobacco-smoke, "to explain the birth of this being, it will be necessary to disentangle for you the obscurest of all Christian creeds; but it is not easy to be clear when discussing the most incomprehensible of all revelations, the latest flame of faith, they say, that has blazed on our ball of clay.—Do you know anything of Swedenborg?"

"Nothing but his name. Of himself, his writings, his religion, I am wholly ignorant."

"Well, then, I will tell you all about Swedenborg."

III

SERAPHITA—SERAPHITUS

After a pause, while the pastor seemed to be collecting his thoughts, he went on as follows:—

"Emanuel von Swedenborg was born at Upsala, in Sweden, in the month of January 1688, as some authors say, or, according to his epitaph, in 1689. His father was bishop of Skara. Swedenborg lived to the age of eighty-five, and died in London on the 29th March 1772. I use the word 'died' to express a change of condition only. According to his disciples, Swedenborg has been at Jarvis and in Paris since that time.—Permit me, my dear friend," said the pastor, with a gesture to check interruption, "I am relating the tale without affirming or denying the facts. Listen, and when I have done you can think what you choose. I will warn you when I myself judge, criticise, or dispute the doctrines, so as to show my intellectual neutrality between reason and the man himself.

"Emanuel Swedenborg's life was divided into two distinct phases," Becker went on. "From 1688 till 1745 Baron Emanuel von Swedenborg was known in the world as a man of vast learning, esteemed and beloved for his virtues, always blameless, and invariably helpful. While filling important public posts in Sweden, he published, between 1709 and 1740, several important books on mineralogy, physics, mathematics, and astronomy, which were of value in the scientific world. He invented a method of constructing docks to receive vessels; he treated many very important questions, from the height of the flood-tide to the position of the earth in space,

He discovered the way to construct more efficient locks on canals, as well as simpler methods for the smelting of metals. In short, he never took up a science without advancing it.

"In his youth he studied Hebrew, Greek, Latin, and the Oriental languages, and became so familiar with these tongues that several celebrated professors constantly consulted him, and he was enabled to discover in Tartary some traces of the earliest book of God's Word, called the *Book of the Wars of Jehovah,* and of the Judgments mentioned by Moses (Numbers xxi. 14, 15), by Joshua, Jeremiah, and Samuel. The wars of the Lord are said to be the historical portion, and the Judgments the prophetic portion, of this book, written prior to *Genesis.* Swedenborg even asserted that the Book of Jasher, or of the Upright, mentioned by Joshua, existed in Eastern Tartary with the worship by Correspondences. A Frenchman, I have been told, has recently confirmed Swedenborg's anticipations by announcing the discovery at Bagdad of several parts of the Bible unknown in Europe.

"In 1785, on the occasion of the discussion on animal magnetism started in Paris, and raised almost throughout Europe, in which most men of science took an eager part, Monsieur de Thomé defended Swedenborg's memory in a reply to the assertions so rashly made by the Commissioners appointed by the King of France to inquire into this subject. These gentlemen stated that there was no theory accounting for the action of the lodestone, whereas Swedenborg had made it his study so early as in 1720. Monsieur de Thomé took the opportunity to point out the reasons for the neglect in which the most celebrated savants had left the name of the learned Swede, so as to be free to plunder his volumes and use his treasures in their own works. 'Some of the most illustrious,' said Monsieur de Thomé, alluding to Buffon's *Theory of the Earth,* 'are mean enough to dress in the peacock's plumage without giving him the credit.' Finally, by several convincing quotations from Swedenborg's encyclopædic writings, he proved that this great prophet had outstripped by many centuries the slow progress of human learning; and, indeed, to read his works is enough to carry conviction on this point.

"In one passage he is the precursor of the present system of chemistry, announcing that the products of organic nature can all be decomposed and resolved into two pure elements; that water, air, and fire are not elements; in another he goes in a few words to the heart of magnetic mystery, and thus anticipates Mesmer.—In short," said the minister, pointing to a long shelf between the stove and the window, on which were books of various sizes, "there are seventeen works by him; one of them, published in 1734, *Studies in Philosophy and Mineralogy,* consists of three folio volumes.

"These books, which bear witness to Swedenborg's practical knowledge, were given to me by Baron Seraphitus, his cousin, and Seraphita's father.

"In 1740 Swedenborg sank into complete silence, never relaxing it excepting to renounce temporal studies and to think exclusively of the spiritual world.

"He received his first commands from heaven in 1745. This is how he relates his call:

"'One evening, in London, after he had dined, eating heartily, a thick mist filled the room. When the darkness cleared away, a being that had assumed a human form rose up in a corner of the room and said in a terrible voice, "Do not eat so much." He then fasted completely. Next evening the same man was visible, radiant with light, and said to him:

"'"I am sent by God, who has chosen thee to set forth to men the meaning of His word and His creation. I will dictate what thou shalt write."

"The vision lasted but a few minutes. The angel, he said, was clad in purple.

"During that night the eyes of his *inner man* were opened and enabled to see into the heavens, into the world of spirits, and into hell, three different circles, where he met persons he had known who had perished from their human state, some long ago, and some quite recently. From that time Swedenborg always lived the spiritual life, and remained in this world as a being sent from God.

"Though his mission was disputed by the incredulous, his

conduct was visibly that of a being superior to human weakness. In the first instance, though limited by his means to the strictest necessaries, he gave away immense sums, and was known to be the means of restoring, in various commercial towns, some great houses of business that had failed, or were failing. No one who appealed to his generosity went away without being helped on the spot. An incredulous Englishman, going in search of him, met him in Paris, and he has recorded that Swedenborg's doors were always left open. One day his servant complained of this neglect, which exposed him to suspicion if his master should be robbed.

"'Let him make his mind easy,' said Swedenborg, smiling; 'I forgive him want of faith; he cannot see the guardian who keeps watch before my door.'

"And, in fact, in whatever country he might be living, his doors were never shut, and he never lost anything.

"When he was at Gothenburg, a town sixty miles away from Stockholm, three days before the news arrived of the great fire that raged at Stockholm, he had announced the hour at which it had begun, adding that his house was unharmed—which was true.

"The Queen of Sweden, when at Berlin, told the King, her brother, that one of her ladies being summoned to repay a sum of money which she knew that her husband had returned before his death, being unable to find the receipt, had gone to Swedenborg and begged him to inquire of her husband where the proof of payment could be. On the following day Swedenborg told her the place where the receipt was; then, in accordance with the lady's desire, he called upon the dead man to appear to his wife, and she saw her husband, in a dream, in the dressing-gown he had worn before his death, and he showed her the document in the place mentioned by Swedenborg, where in fact it lay hidden.

"One day, on sailing from London in the ship of a Captain Dixon, he heard a lady asking if there were a good stock of provisions on board.

"'You will not need a very large quantity,' said he. 'In

a week, at two o'clock, we shall be in the port of Stockholm,' and it was so.

"The state of second sight, into which Swedenborg could pass at will in relation to earthly things, astonishing as it was to all who knew him, by it marvelous results, was no more than a weaker development of his power of seeing into the skies.

"Of all his visions, those in which he traveled to other astral worlds are not the least curious, and his descriptions are no doubt surprisingly artless in their details. A man whose great scientific acquirements are beyond question, who combined in his brain conception, will, and imagination, would certainly have invented something better if he had invented at all. Nor does the fantastic literature of the East contain anything that can have suggested the idea of this bewildering narrative full of poetic germs, if we may compare a work of faith to the writings of Arab fancy.

"The account of his being snatched up by the angel who guided him in his first voyage is sublime to a degree as far beyond the poems of Klopstock, Milton, Tasso, and Dante, as the earth, by God's will, is from the sun. This chapter, which forms the introduction to his *Treatise on the Astral Worlds,* has never been published; it remains among the oral traditions left by Swedenborg to the three disciples who were dearest to him. M. Silverichm has it in writing. Baron Seraphitus sometimes tried to tell me of it; but his memory of his cousin was so vivid that he stopped after a few words, and fell into a reverie from which nothing could rouse him.

"The discourse in which the angel proved to Swedenborg that those planets are not created to wander uninhabited, crushes all human science, the Baron assured me, under the grandeur of its divine logic.

"According to the Seer, the inhabitants of Jupiter do not affect the sciences, which they call Shades; those of Mercury object to the expression of ideas by words, which they think too material, and they have a language of the eye; those of Saturn are persistently tormented by evil spirits; those of

the Moon are as small as children of six years old, their voice proceeds from the stomach, and they creep about; those of Venus are of gigantic stature, but very stupid, and live by robbery; part of that planet, however, is inhabited by beings of great gentleness, who live loving to do good. Finally, he describes the customs of the people who dwell on those globes, and gives an account of the general purpose of their existence as part of the universe in terms so precise, adding explanations which agree so well with the effects of their apparent motion in the system of the universe, that some day, perhaps, scientific men will drink of these luminous founts. Here," said the pastor, taking down a volume and opening it at a page where a marker was placed, "these are the words which conclude this great work: 'If any one should doubt my having been transported to so many astral earths, let him remember my remarks as to distances in the other life. They exist only in relation to the external form of man; now I, having been inwardly constituted like the angelic spirits of those globes, have been enabled to know them.'

"The circumstances to which we owed the residence in this district of Baron Seraphitus, Swedenborg's dearly loved cousin, made me intimately familiar with every fact of the life of that extraordinary man.

"Not long since he was accused of imposture in some European newspapers, which reported the following facts as related in a letter from the Chevalier Beylon. Swedenborg, 'informed,' it was said, 'by some senators of a secret correspondence between the late Queen of Sweden and her brother, the Prince of Prussia, revealed the contents to that Princess, leaving her to believe that he had acquired the information by supernatural means. A man of the highest credit, Monsieur Charles-Léonard von Stahlhammer, Captain of the King's Guard and Knight of the Sword, refuted this calumny in a letter.'"

The pastor hunted through some papers in his table-drawer, found a newspaper, and handed it to Wilfrid, who read aloud the following letter:

"STOCKHOLM, *May* 13, 1788.

"I have read with astonishment the letter reporting the interview between the famous Swedenborg and Queen Louisa-Ulrica. All the circumstances are falsified; and I hope the writer will pardon me if I show him how greatly he is mistaken, by giving here an exact account, of which the truth can be attested by several personages of distinction who were present, and who are still living.

"In 1758, not long after the Prince of Prussia's death Swedenborg came to Court; he was in the habit of doing so very regularly. No sooner did the Queen see him than she asked, 'By the way, Baron Assessor, have you seen my brother?' Swedenborg said he had not, and the Queen replied, 'If you should see him, greet him from me.'

"She had no idea in saying this but of a jest; it did not occur to her to ask for any information concerning her brother.

"A week later—not twenty-four days, nor for a private audience—Swedenborg came again, but so early that the Queen had not yet left her own apartment, known as the white room, where she was chatting with her ladies of honor and other ladies about the Court. Swedenborg did not wait for the Queen to come out. He went into her private room and spoke in her ear. The Queen, quite astounded, turned faint, and it took some time to revive her. When she had recovered herself, she said to those about her, 'God alone and my brother could know what he has just told me!' And she said he had spoken of her last correspondence with the Prince, of which the subject had been known to themselves only.

"I cannot explain how Swedenborg gained his knowledge of this secret; but what I can aver on my honor is that neither Count H——, as the author of the letter states, nor any one else, had intercepted or read the Queen's letters. The Senate had at that time allowed her to write to her brother in the strictest confidence, regarding the correspondence as a matter perfectly indifferent to the State. It is evident that the writer of that letter knew nothing of Count H——'s character

That distinguished gentleman, who did his country important service, combines with intellectual talent fine qualities of the heart, and his advanced years have not deteriorated his noble gifts. Throughout his official career he has been equally remarkable for enlightened political views and the most scrupulous integrity, and he was always the declared enemy of secret intrigues and covert devices, which he regarded as the basest means to any end.

"Nor did the writer know Swedenborg the Assessor; the only weak point in this thoroughly honest man was his belief in apparitions and spirits; but I knew him for a long time, and I can positively state that he was as well assured that he certainly did talk and mingle with spirits as I am at this moment of writing these lines. As a citizen and as a friend, he was a man of absolute integrity, with a horror of imposture, and he led an exemplary life.

"Hence the account given of the incident by the Chevalier de Beylon is without foundation; and the visit said to have been paid to Swedenborg, at night, by Counts H—— and T—— is a pure invention.

"The writer of the letter may rest assured that I am anything rather than a follower of Swedenborg; nothing but the love of truth has moved me to relate with accuracy a fact that has often been told with details that are incorrect; and I affirm what I have here written to be the truth, and sign it with my name."

"The proofs of his mission given by Swedenborg to the families of Prussia and Sweden no doubt formed a basis for the belief he inspired in several personages of the two Courts," the pastor went on, replacing the newspaper in his drawer. "At the same time, I cannot tell you all the facts of his material and visible life; his habits precluded their being exactly known. He lived in strict retirement, never trying to grow rich or to rise to fame. He was even remarkable for a sort of repugnance to proselytizing; he spoke freely to very few persons, and never communicated those gifts but

to those who were conspicuous for faith, wisdom, and love. He could read at a glance the frame of mind in which each one approached him, and could make seers of those whom he desired to touch with his inward Word.

"After the year 1745 his disciples never saw him do a single thing from a merely human motive.

"One man only, a Swedish priest named Matthésius, accused him of madness. By a singular coincidence this Matthésius, the enemy of Swedenborg and his writings, went mad not long after, and was living a few years since at Stockholm on a pension allowed him by the King of Sweden.

"A discourse in honor of Swedenborg was composed with great care as to the details of his life, and read at a general meeting in the Hall of the Royal Academy of Sciences at Stockholm, by Monsieur de Sandel, Councillor to the College of Mines, in 1786. Finally, a deposition laid before the Lord Mayor of London testifies to the smallest circumstances of Swedenborg's last illness and death under the ministrations of Pastor Férélius, a Swedish ecclesiastic of the highest respectability. The persons attesting declared that, far from recanting, Swedenborg always averred the truth of his writings.

" 'In a hundred years' time,' said he, 'my doctrines will govern the Church.'

"He foretold very precisely the day and hour of his death. On that day, Sunday, March 29th, 1772, he asked what o'clock it was.

" 'Five o'clock,' was the answer.

" 'It is all over,' said he. 'God bless you!'

"And ten minutes after he died quite calmly with a gentle sigh. Thus, moderation, simplicity, and solitude were the features of his life.

"Whenever he had finished writing a treatise, he took ship to have it printed in London or in Holland, and never talked about it. He thus published twenty-seven works in all, written, as he declared, at the dictation of angels. Whether or no this be true, few men are capable of enduring this flaming language.

"Here they all are," said the minister, pointing to an upper shelf on which stood about sixty volumes. "The seven books on which the Spirit of God has shed its brightest light are: *The Delights of Wisdom in Conjugal Love; Heaven and Hell; the Apocalypse Explained; An Exposition of the Inward Sense; On the Divine Love; The True Christian Religion; The Angelic Wisdom of the Omnipotence, Omniscience, and Omnipresence of those who share the Eternity and Immensity of God.*

"His explanation of the *Apocalypse* begins with these words," said the pastor, opening the volume that was lying near him: "'Herein I have written nothing of my own; I have spoken at the bidding of the Lord, who said to John, by the same angel, "Thou shalt not seal the words of this prophecy."'

"My dear sir," the good man went on, looking at Wilfrid, "many a winter night have I quaked in every limb while reading the tremendous works in which this man sets forth the greatest marvels in perfect good faith.

"'I have seen,' says he, 'the heavens and the angels. The spiritual man sees spiritual man far more clearly than the earthly man sees earthly man. I obey the command of the Lord who hath given it to me to do. Men are free not to believe me; I cannot put others into the state into which God hath put me. It is not in my power to make them hold conversation with the angels, nor to work a miracle in predisposing their understanding; they themselves must be the agents of their angelical exaltation. For twenty-eight years now I have dwelt in the spiritual world with the angels, and yet on earth with men; for it hath pleased the Lord to open the eyes of my spirit as he opened the eyes of Paul, of Daniel, and of Elisha.'

"Certain persons, however, have had visions of the spiritual world through the complete severance of their external body and their inner man by somnambulism. In that state, Swedenborg tells us in his *Treatise on Angelic Wisdom,* man may be raised to celestial light, because, the physical senses

being in abeyance, heavenly influences act on the inner man without interference.

"A good many persons who do not doubt that Swedenborg had celestial revelations, still do not regard all his writings as equally stamped with divine inspiration. Others insist on a complete acceptance of Swedenborg, while confessing his obscurities; but they think that it was the imperfection of earthly language that hindered the prophet in expressing his spiritual visions, so that such obscurities disappear before the eyes of those who are regenerate by faith; to use a striking expression of his favorite disciple's, the flesh is begotten externally.

"To poets and writers he is infinitely marvelous; to seers it is all absolute truth. His descriptions have been a matter of scandal to some Christians; critics have laughed at the 'celestial substance' of his temples, his golden palaces, his magnificent mansions where angels flutter and play; others have ridiculed his groves of mystical trees, and gardens where flowers have speech, where the air is white, and mystical gems —sardonyx, carbuncle, chrysolite, chrysoprase, cyanite, chalcedony, and beryl, the Urim and Thummim—are endowed with motion, express celestial truths, and may be questioned, since they reply by variations of light (*True Religion*, 217, 218). Some very good men will not recognize his worlds where colors are heard in delicious concerts, where words are flames, and the Word is written in inflected letters (*True Religion*, 278). Even in the North some writers have made fun of his gates of pearl, of the diamonds with which the houses of his New Jerusalem are paved and furnished, where the humblest utensils are made of the rarest materials.

"'But,' his disciples argue, 'though such substances are sparely distributed in this world, is that any reason why they should not be abundant in another? On earth they are but earthly, while in heaven they are seen under celestial aspects in relation to the angelic state.' And Swedenborg would quote on such points the great words of Jesus Christ, 'If I have told you earthly things and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things?' (John iii. 12.)

"I, sir, have read Swedenborg from beginning to end," the pastor went on, with an emphatic gesture. "I may say it with pride, since I have preserved my reason. As you read you must either lose your wits or become a seer. Though I have escaped both forms of madness, I have often felt unknown raptures, deep amazement, inward joy such as can only come of the fulness of truth, the evidence of heavenly illumination. Everything here below shrinks, dwindles, as the soul studies the burning pages of those writings. It is impossible not to be struck with astonishment on reflecting that within the space of thirty years this man published twenty-five quarto volumes on the truths of the spiritual world, written in Latin, the shortest containing five hundred pages, and all in small print. He left twenty more, it is said, in London, in the care of his nephew, M. Silverichm, formerly chaplain to the King of Sweden. Certainly the man who, between twenty and sixty, spent himself in publishing a sort of encyclopedia, must have had supernatural help to enable him to compose these prodigious treatises, at an age when the powers of man are beginning to fail.

"In these works there are thousands of propositions, all numbered, none of them contradictory. Method, preciseness, and a collected mind are everywhere conspicuous, all based on the one fact of the existence of angels. His *True Religion,* in which his whole dogma is summed up, is a work of powerful lucidity, and was conceived and carried out when he was eighty-three years of age. His ubiquity, his omniscience, have indeed never been disproved by his critics or his enemies.

"Nevertheless, even when I was soaked, so to speak, in this torrent of celestial illumination, God did not open my inward eye; I judged of these writings by the reason of an unregenerate man. I have often been of opinion that Swedenborg, the *inspired,* must have misunderstood the angels. I laughed at many visions, which, according to the seers, I ought reverently to believe in. I could not, for instance, appreciate the inflected writing of the angels, nor their belts of thicker or thinner gold. Though the statement, 'There

are solitary angels,' at first struck me as singularly pathetic, I could not reconcile this loneliness with their manner of marriage. I did not see why the Virgin Mary should wear white satin robes in heaven. I dared question why the giant demons Enakim and Hephilim came again and again to fight with the Cherubim in the Apocalyptic fields of Armageddon. I fail to see how the Satanic and heavenly angels can still loud discussions. Baron Seraphitus replied to me that these details referred to the angels who are yet on earth in human form.

"The visions of the Swedish prophet are often disfigured by grotesque touches. One of his *Memorabilia*—the name he gives them—begins with these words: 'I saw the spirits met together, and they had hats on their heads.' In another of these *Memorabilia* he received from heaven a small paper on which, he says, he saw the letters used by primitive races, composed of curved lines with little rings curling upwards. For clearer proof of this communication from heaven I should have liked him to deposit this document with the Royal Academy of Sciences at Stockholm.

"After all, I may be wrong: the material absurdities that are scattered throughout his works have spiritual meanings perhaps. Otherwise, how can we account for the growing influence of his doctrine? His followers now number more than seven hundred thousand souls, partly in the United States of America, where many sects have joined them in a body, and partly in England, where there are seven thousand Swedenborgians in the city of Manchester alone. Men no less distinguished by their learning than by their worldly rank—some in Germany, and some in Prussia and the North—have publicly adopted Swedenborg's beliefs, which indeed are more consolatory than those of many another Christian communion.

"I should now like to expound to you in a few short words the capital points of the doctrines set forth by Swedenborg to his Church; but such an abridgment, from memory, would necessarily be defective. I can, therefore, only enlarge on the arcana connected with the birth of Seraphita."

Here the pastor paused while meditating apparently to collect his reminiscences, and then he went on:—

"Having proved mathematically, that man shall live for ever in an upper or a lower sphere, Swedenborg gives the title of angelic spirits to such beings as, in this world, are prepared for heaven, where they become angels. According to him, God did not create angels independently; there are none but those who have been human beings on earth. Thus the earth is the nursery ground for heaven. The angels are not angels by original nature; they are transformed into angels by an intimate union with God which God never refuses, the very essence of God being never negative, but always active (*Angelic Wisdom*).

"Angelic spirits, then, go through three natures of love, for man can only be regenerate by stages (*True Religion*). First, love of self: the supreme expression of it is human genius, of which the works are worshiped. Next, love of the world at large, which produces prophets and those great men whom the earth accepts as guides, and hails as divine. Finally, love of heaven, which forms angelic spirits. These spirits are, so to speak, the flowers of humanity, which is epitomized, and strives to be epitomized, in them. They must have either the love or the wisdom of heaven; but they must dwell in that love before they dwell in wisdom. Thus the first transformation of man is to love. To achieve this first grade, in his previous existences he must have gone through hope and charity, which engender in him the gifts of faith and prayer. The ideas gained by the exercise of these virtues are transmitted to each new human embodiment within which the metamorphoses of the inner man are hidden. Nothing avails separately; hope is inseparable from charity, faith from prayer; the four faces of this figure are equally important. 'For lack of one virtue,' says he, 'the angelic spirit is as a flawed pearl.' Thus each existence is a sphere into which are absorbed the celestial treasures of the former one. The great perfection of the angelic spirits comes of this mysterious progress, by which nothing is lost of the qualities successively

acquired till they attain to their most glorious incarnation; for, at every fresh transformation, they unconsciously lose something of the flesh and its works.

"When he lives in love man has thrown off all his evil passions; hope, charity, faith, and prayer have, to use the word of Isaiah, *winnowed* his inner man, which must no longer be polluted by any earthly affection. Hence the great lesson in Saint Luke, 'Provide yourselves a treasure in the heavens that faileth not,' and the teaching of Jesus Christ that we should leave this world to men, for it is theirs, and purify ourselves and go to the Father.

"The second transformation is to wisdom. Wisdom is that apprehension of heavenly things to which the spirit rises through love. The spirit of love has triumphed over force; as a result of having conquered every earthly passion, he loves God blindly; but the spirit of wisdom has intelligence and knowledge of why he loves. The wings of the first are spread and bear him up to God; the wings of the second are folded in awe derived from knowledge: he knows God. One incessantly desires to see God, and soars up to Him; the other stands near to Him and trembles.

"The union of a spirit of love with a spirit of wisdom lifts the creature into the divine state in which the soul is woman and the body man—the final expression of humanity, in which the spirit is supreme over the form, and the form still contends with the divine spirit; for the form, which is the flesh, is ignorant and rebellious, and would fain remain gross. It is this supreme conflict which gives rise to the inexpressible anguish which the heavens alone can see, and which Christ endured in the Garden of Olives. After death, the first heaven opens to receive this purified compound human nature. Thus men die in despair, while spirits die in ecstasy. Hence the natural state, in which are all unregenerate beings; the spiritual state, in which are the angelic spirits; and the divine state, in which the angel dwells before bursting its husk, are the three degrees of existence by which man attains to heaven.

"A sentence of Swedenborg's will admirably explain to you the difference between the natural and the spiritual states: 'To men,' says he, 'the natural passes into the spiritual; they regard the world under its visible forms, and perceive it in a reality adjusted to their senses. But to the angelic spirit the spiritual passes into the natural; he regards the world in its inmost spirit, not under its outer form.'

"Hence our human sciences are but the analysis of form. The learned of this world are purely superficial, as their knowledge is; their inner man is of no avail except to preserve an aptitude for apprehension and truth. The angelic spirit goes far beyond this. His knowledge is the thought of which human science is the mere utterance; he derives a knowledge of things from the Word by studying the correspondences through which the worlds are harmonized with the heavens. The Word of God was written entirely by such correspondences; it contains a hidden or spiritual meaning which cannot be understood without the study of correspondences. 'There are,' says Swedenborg (*Celestial Doctrine*), 'innumerable arcana in the inward meaning of the correspondences.'

"Those men who have laughed to scorn the books in which the prophets have treasured the Word, were in such a state of ignorance as men are in, who, in this world, knowing nothing of a science, mock the truths of that science. To know the correspondences of the Word with heavenly things, to know the correspondences that exist between the visible and ponderable things of the earthly globe and invisible and imponderable things of the spiritual world, is to 'have the heavens in your understanding.'

"Every object of every creation proceeded from the hand of God, and has, therefore, necessarily a hidden meaning, as we see in those grand words of Isaiah, 'The earth is as a garment' (Isaiah li. 6). This mysterious tie between the smallest atoms of matter and the heavens constitutes what Swedenborg calls a *Celestial Arcanum*. Indeed, his *Treatise on the Celestial Arcana*, in which he explains the correspond-

ences or symbolism of the natural and spiritual, containing, as Jacob Boehm has it, the 'sign and sealing of all things,' contains no less than thirteen thousand propositions, filling sixteen volumes. 'This wonderful apprehension of correspondences which the grace of God vouchsafed to Swedenborg,' says one of his disciples, 'is the secret of the interest taken in his works.' According to this commentator, 'everything is derived from heaven, everything returns to heaven. The prophet's words are sublime and lucid; he speaks in the heavens, and is understood on earth. A volume might be written on any one of his phrases.' And, among a thousand others, he quotes this text: 'The realm of heaven,' says Swedenborg (*Arcana Celestia*), 'is the realm of impulsion. Action takes form in heaven, and thence in the world, and by degrees in the minutest details of earthly life; earthly effects being thus continuous with heavenly causes, the result in every case is correspondent and symbolical. Man is the link of union between the Natural and the Spiritual.'

"Angelic spirits, then, inevitably know the correspondences that link each earthly thing to heaven, and they know the inmost sense of the prophetic words which foretell their evolution. Thus, to these spirits everything here below has its hidden meaning. The smallest flower is a thought, a life answering to some feature of the Great Whole, of whom they have a persistent intuition. To them the adulteries and debauchery of which the Scripture and the Prophets speak, and which are often misapprehended by self-styled scribes, signify the state of the souls who in this world persist in debasing themselves with earthly affections, and so confirm their divorce from heaven. Clouds symbolize the veils that shroud God. The candlesticks, the shewbread, the horses and riders, the whores, the jewels,—everything in the Scriptures has for them a super-sensual meaning, and reveals the future of earthly history in its relation to heaven. They can all enter into the truth of the declarations of Saint John, which human science demonstrates, and substantially proves at a later time, such as this, 'pregnant,' says Swedenborg, 'with many human

sciences': 'I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away' (Rev. xxi. 1). They know the suppers where 'they eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captives, and the flesh of mighty men,' to which [the fowls] are bidden by an angel standing in the sun (Rev. xix. 17, 18). They see the woman with wings, clothed with the sun, and the man always armed. 'The horse of the Apocalypse,' says Swedenborg, 'is the visible image of the human intellect ridden by death, because it bears in itself the element of its own destruction.' Finally, they recognize the nations hidden under forms which, to the ignorant, seem grotesque.

"When a man is prepared to receive the prophetical insufflation of correspondences, the Spirit of the Word moves within him; he then sees that creations are but transformations; it gives vitality to his intellect, and a burning thirst for truth which can only be quenched in heaven. In proportion to the greater or less perfection of his inner man he can conceive of the power of the angelic spirit; and guided by desire, the least perfect state of unregenerate man, he proceeds to hope, which opens before him the world of spirits, and thence to prayer, which is the key of heaven.

"What human creature could fail to desire to become worthy of passing into the sphere of those intellects that live in secret by love or wisdom? During their life on earth those spirits remain pure; they neither see, nor think, nor speak as other men do.

"There are two modes of perception—the external and the internal. Man is wholly external; the angelic spirit is wholly internal. The spirit penetrates the sense of numbers; it masters them all and knows their meanings. It is lord of motion, and is one with everything by ubiquity: 'One angel is present to another whenever he will,' says the Swedish Seer (*Angelic Wisdom concerning Divine Love*), for he has the power of escaping from the body, and sees the heavens as the prophets saw them, and as Swedenborg himself saw them.

"'In this state,' he says, in the *True Religion,* 'the spirit of a man is borne from one place to another, his body remaining where it is, a state in which I lived for twenty-six years.' This is the meaning to be given to the Bible phrase, 'The Spirit carried me.'

"Angelic wisdom is to human wisdom what the numberless forces of Nature are to its action, which is single. Everything lives again, moves, and exists in the spirit, for it is in God, as it is expressed in these words of Saint Paul, *In Deo sumus, movemur et vivimus* (In God we live and move and have our being, Acts xvii. 28).. Earth offers no obstacle to it, as the Word offers no difficulties. Its nearness to the divine state enables it to see the thought of God veiled by the Word, just as the spirit dwelling inwardly can communicate with the hidden meaning of all the things of this world. Science is the language of the temporal world; love is that of the spiritual world. Man, indeed, describes more than he explains; while the angelic spirit sees and understands. Science saddens man; love enraptures the angel; science is still seeking, love has found. Man judges of Nature in relation to itself; the angelic spirit judges of it in relation to heaven. In short, to the spirits everything speaks.

"The spirits are in the secret of the reciprocal harmony of creations; they are in accord with the spirit of sounds, with the spirit of colors, with the spirit of vegetable life; they can question minerals, and minerals reply to their thoughts. What, to them, are the learning and the treasures of earth when they can constantly command them by their sight, and when the worlds of which men think so much are for the spirits no more than the topmost step whence they will fly up to God? Heavenly love, or heavenly wisdom, are visibly with them, seen by the elect in a halo of light that envelops them. Their innocence, of which a child's innocence is the external image, has knowledge which children have not; they are innocent, and they know.

"'And,' says Swedenborg, 'the innocence of heaven makes so deep an impression on the soul, that those who enjoy it

feel a rapture which goes with them all through life, as I myself have experienced.' 'It is enough, perhaps,' he says elsewhere, 'to have the smallest inkling of it to transform one for ever, and, by desiring to go to heaven, to enter into the sphere of hope.'

"His doctrine of marriage may be summed up in a few words:

" 'The Lord took the beauty and grace of man's life and infused them into woman. When man is disunited from this beauty and elegance of life, he is austere, sad, or savage; when he is reunited to them, he is happy, he is complete.'

"The angels are for ever in the perfection of beauty. Their marriages take place with miraculous ceremonies. To such an union, from which no children are born, man brings Understanding, woman brings Will; they become one being—one flesh on earth; then, after putting on the heavenly body, they go to heaven. On earth, in the natural state, the mutual affection of the two sexes leads to lust, which is an *effect,* producing fatigue and disgust; but in their heavenly form, the pair, having become one spirit, finds in itself a cause of perpetual joys. Swedenborg had seen such an union of spirits, who, as Saint Luke has written, 'neither marry nor are given in marriage,' and this union leads to none but spiritual pleasures. An angel offered to take him to witness such a marriage, and bore him away on his wings; the wings are only symbolical, and not an earthly reality. He clothed him in his festal garment; and Swedenborg, seeing himself arrayed in light, asked the reason.

" 'On such occasions,' replied the angel, 'our robes light up and shine and are nuptial garments' (*The Delight of Wisdom in Conjugal Love*).

"He then saw two angels who came—one from the South and the other from the East. The angel from the South rode in a chariot drawn by two white horses, whose reins were of the color and the radiance of the morning; but when they came close to him in heaven, he saw no more of the chariot or horses. The angel from the East, clothed in purple, and

the angel from the South, in hyacinth color, rushed together like two breaths of wind, and were one; one was an angel of Love, and the other an angel of Wisdom. Swedenborg's guide told him that on earth these two angels had been bound by an inward sympathy, and constantly united, though divided by space. Consent, which is the essence of happy marriage on earth, is the habitual condition of angels in heaven. Love is the light of their world.

"The perpetual ecstasy of the angels is produced by the faculty, bestowed on them by God, of giving back to Him the joy they have in Him. This reciprocity of the infinite constitutes their life. In heaven they too become infinite by partaking of the essential nature of God, who is self-subsistent. Such is the vastness of the heavens where the angels dwell, that if man were endowed with vision as constantly rapid as the transmission of light from the sun to the earth, and if he gazed through all eternity, his eyes would find no horizon to rest on. Light alone can be an emblem of the joys of heaven. 'It is,' says he (*Angelic Wisdom*), "an effluence of the virtue of God, a pure emanation from His glory, compared to which our most brilliant day is dark. It is omnipotent, it renews everything, and cannot be absorbed; it surrounds the angel, putting him into contact with God by infinite joys which are felt to multiply and reproduce themselves to infinity. This light kills the man who is not prepared to receive it. No one on earth, or indeed in the heavens, can look on God and live. This is why it is written (Exodus xix. 12, 21-23), 'Set bounds unto the people round about [the Mount] . . . lest they break through . . . and many of them perish.' And again (Exodus xxxiv. 29-35), 'When Moses came down with the two tables of testimony, the skin of his face shone, and Moses put a veil upon his face till he had done speaking with the people.' The Transfiguration of Jesus Christ also testifies to the light shed by a messenger from heaven and the extreme joy of the angels in being for ever bathed in it. 'His face,' says Saint Matthew (xvii. 2), 'did shine as the sun, and His raiment was as white as

the light . . . and a bright cloud overshadowed the disciples.'

"When a planet is inhabited only by beings who reject the Lord and misprize His Word, when the angelic spirits have gathered from the four winds, God sends a destroying angel to alter the whole mass of that rebellious world, which, in the vast spaces of the universe, is to Him what an infertile seed is in the natural world. As he approaches that globe, the destroying angel, riding on a cornet, reverses it on its axis and makes the continents become the bottom of the sea, the highest mountains then are islands, and the lands hitherto covered by the seas reappear in all their freshness, obeying the laws of Genesis; thus the Word of God is in power once more on a new earth, which everywhere shows the effects of terrestrial waters and celestial fires. The light the angel brings down from heaven makes the sun pale. Then, as Isaiah saith (ii. 10, 19), men will enter into the holes of the rocks and hide themselves in the dust. 'They will cry to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the wrath of the Lamb' (Rev. vi. 16). The Lamb is the great emblem of the angels who are unrecognized and persecuted on earth.

"Christ Himself hath said, 'Blessed are they that mourn! Blessed are the meek! Blessed are the peacemakers.' All Swedenborg is there: Suffer, believe, and love. To love truly, must we not have suffered; must we not believe? Love begets strength, and strength gives wisdom; this is intelligence, for strength and wisdom include will. Is not true intellect composed of knowledge, will, and wisdom, the three attributes of the angelic spirit?

" 'If the universe has a meaning, that surely is the worthiest of God,' said Monsieur Saint-Martin to me when I saw him during his visit to Sweden.

"But," the minister went on, after a pause, "of what value can these shreds be, snatched from a work so vast that the only way to give you an idea of it is to compare it to a river of light, a torrent of flame? When a man plunges into it, he is carried away by an overwhelming flood. Dante Ali-

ghieri's poem seems a mere speck to the reader who will dive into the innumerable passages in which Swedenborg has given actuality to the heavenly spheres, just as Beethoven builds up palaces of harmony out of thousands of notes, and architects construct cathedrals of thousands of stones. He flings you up to infinite heights, where your mind sometimes fails to bear you up. It is necessary certainly to have a powerful brain if you are to come back sane and safe to our social notions.

"Swedenborg was especially attached to Baron Seraphitz, whose name, according to an old Swedish custom, had from time immemorial taken the Latin suffix *us*. The Baron was the Swedish prophet's most zealous disciple; the eyes of his inner man had been opened by the Seer, who had prepared him to live in conformity with commands from on high. He was in search of a woman with the angelic spirit, and Swedenborg showed her to him in a vision. His bride was the daughter of a shoemaker in London; in her, said Swedenborg, the life of heaven shone brightly, and she had gone through the first tests. After the prophet was translated, the Baron came to Jarvis to solemnize his heavenly nuptials in the practice of prayer. For my part, sir, I, who am no seer, could only note the earthly life of the couple, and it was undoubtedly that of the saints whose virtues are the glory of the Roman Church. They alleviated the sufferings of the inhabitants, giving them a portion which does not suffice to live on without work, but which is then sufficient for their needs; those who lived with them never saw them moved to anger or impatience; they were invariably gentle and beneficent, full of amiability, graciousness, and true kindness; their marriage was the harmony of two souls in constant union. Two eider-ducks in equal flight, a sound and its echo, the thought and the word, are but imperfect images of that union. Here they were loved by everybody with an affection which can only be compared to the love of plants for the sun

"The wife was simple in her manners and beautiful to

behold: her face was lovely, and her dignity worthy of the most august personage.

"In 1783, in the twenty-sixth year of her age, this woman bore a child; it was a time of solemn rejoicing. The husband and wife took leave of the world, telling me that they had no doubt that they should be transformed when the child should have shed the garb of flesh, which would need their care until she should have received strength to live by herself. The child was born, and was this Seraphita with whom we are just now concerned; for the nine months before her birth her father and mother lived in greater retirement than before, uplifting themselves to heaven by prayer. Their hope was that they might see Swedenborg, and faith procured its fulfilment. On the day of Seraphita's birth, Swedenborg appeared in Jarvis, and filled the room where the babe was born with light. His words, it is said, were:

"'The work is accomplished; the heavens rejoice!'

"The servants in the house heard strange sounds of music, brought, they declared, by the winds from the four points of the compass.

"The spirit of Swedenborg led the father out of the house and out on the fiord, where it left him. Some men of Jarvis, going up to the Baron, heard him repeating these soothing words from Scripture—'How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings!'

"I was setting out from the manse to go to the castle, intending to baptize the child, and carry out the duties enjoined on me by law, when I met the Baron.

"'Your ministrations are superfluous,' said he; 'our child is to be nameless on earth. You will not baptize with earthly waters one who has been bathed in fires from heaven. This child will always be a flower; you will not see it grow old; you will see it pass away. You have existence, it has life; you have external senses, it has not; it is wholly inward.' The words were uttered in a supernatural voice, which impressed me even more than the brightness of his face, which shed a radiance. His whole appearance was a realization of the

fantastic ideas we form of inspired men, as we read the prophecies in the Bible. Still, such effects are not rare in our mountains, where the nitre formed in the permanent snows produces singular effects on our persons.

"I asked him the cause of his agitation.

"'Swedenborg has appeared; I have just parted from him; I have breathed the air of heaven,' said he.

"'Under what form did he appear to you?' I asked.

"'Under his mortal aspect, dressed as he was the last time I saw him in London with Richard Shearsmith, near Coldbath Fields, in July 1771. He had on his shot velveteen coat with steel buttons, a high waistcoat, a white cravat, and the same imposing wig, with heavy, powdered curls at the side, and the hair combed back from the forehead, showing that broad and luminous brow in harmony with his large, square face, so full of calm power. I recognized his nose with its open, ardent nostrils; the mouth that always smiled—an angel's mouth, from which fell these words of promised happiness, "We meet again, soon!" And I felt the glory of heavenly love.'

"The conviction stamped on the Baron's face prohibited any discussion; I listened in silence; his voice had an infectious fervor that warmed me to the core; his enthusiasm stirred my heart, as another man's anger can thrill one's nerves. I followed him, without speaking, home to his house, where I saw the nameless child lying mysteriously wrapped on her mother's bosom. Seraphita heard me come in, and raised her head towards me; her eyes were not those of an ordinary infant; to express the impression they produced on me, I can only say they already saw and understood.

"The childhood of this predestined being was marked by some extraordinary circumstances of climate. For nine years our winters were milder and our summers longer than usual. This phenomenon gave rise to much discussion among the learned; but their explanations, which seemed inadequate to the Doctors of the Academy, made the Baron smile when I repeated them to him.

"Seraphita was never seen perfectly nude, as children are sometimes; she was never touched by the hand of man or woman; she lay spotless on her mother's breast, and she never cried. Old David will confirm these facts if you question him about his mistress, for whom he feels such veneration as the king whose name he bears had for the Ark of God.

"At the age of nine the child began to be absorbed in prayer. Prayer is her life; you saw her in our church on Christmas Day, the only day she ever comes there. She is placed apart from the other worshipers by a considerable distance. If this space is not left about her, she is ill. Indeed, she spends most of her time indoors. The details of her life are, however, unknown; she never shows herself; her faculties, her feelings are essentially inward; she is commonly in the state of mystical contemplation, which, as Papist writers tell us, was familiar to the first Christian recluses, in whom dwelt the tradition of Christ's teaching. Her understanding, her soul, her body, everything about her, is as virginal as the snow on our mountains. At ten years old she was what you see her now.

"When she was nine her father and mother died at the same instant without pain, without any visible malady, after naming the hour at which they should cease to breathe. She, standing at their feet, looked on them with a calm eye, displaying neither grief, nor pain, nor joy, nor curiosity; her father and mother smiled at her.

"When we went in to carry away the two bodies, she said:

"'Take them away!'

"'Seraphita,' said I, for we called her by that name, 'are you not grieved by your father's and mother's death? They loved you so well.'

"'Dead?' said she. 'No, they are still in me. This is nothing,' she added, pointing to the bodies they were taking away.

"This was the third time I had seen her since her birth. It is difficult to see her in church; she stands near the pillar that supports the pulpit, in such a dark corner that it is hardly possible to discern her features.

"Of all the servants of the house, none were left at the time of that event but old David, who, though he is eighty-two years old, manages to do all his mistress' needs. Some of the people of Jarvis have strange tales about the girl. Their stories having assumed some consistency in a land that is greatly addicted to mysteries, I set to work to study Jean Wier's 'Treatise on Sorcery,' and other works on demonology, in which the effects on man of the supernatural (so-called) are recorded, in search of facts analogous to what are ascribed to her——"

"Then you do not believe in her?" asked Wilfrid.

"Indeed, yes," said the pastor with simplicity, "in so far that I regard her as a most fantastic creature, spoilt by her parents, who have turned her brain by the religious notions I have set forth to you."

Minna shook her head in a gentle expression of negation.

"Poor girl!" the pastor went on, "she has inherited from her parents the fatal enthusiasm which misleads mystics and makes them more or less crazy. She fasts in a way that drives poor David to despair. The good old man is like some frail plant that trembles at a breath of wind and basks in the smallest gleam of sunshine. His mistress, whose incomprehensible language he has adopted, is to him the breeze and sunshine; to him her feet are diamonds, her forehead crowned with stars; she moves environed by a white and luminous halo; her voice has an accompaniment of music; she has the gift of becoming invisible. Ask to see her; he will tell you that she is wandering through astral worlds. It is difficult to believe such fables. Every such miracle, you know, is more or less like the story of the Golden Tooth: we have a Golden Tooth at Jarvis, that is all.

"For instance, Duncker, the fisherman, declares that he has seen her plunging into the fiord and coming to the surface in the form of an eider-duck, or walking on the waves during a storm. Fergus, who tends the herds on the *sæter*, says that, in rainy weather, he has seen the sky always clear over the Swedish castle, and always blue over Seraphita's head if she

goes out. Several women hear the chords of an immense organ when Seraphita comes to church, and ask their neighbors quite seriously if they also do not hear it.

"However, my daughter, to whom Seraphita has taken a great fancy these two years past, has heard no music, and has not perceived the heavenly perfumes which embalm the air, they say, wherever she goes. Minna has often come home full of a simple girl's admiration for the beauties of the spring; she is enraptured by the fragrance of the first tender larch shoots, the fir-trees, and the flowers they have enjoyed together; but after our long winter nothing can be more natural than such intense delight. There is nothing very remarkable in the conversation of that being, is there, my child?"

"His secrets are not mine," replied Minna. "When I am with him, I know all things; away from him, I know nothing; with him, I cease to be myself; away from him, I forget that more perfect life. Seeing him is as a dream, of which my remembrance depends on his will. I may have heard, when with him, the music of which Bancker's wife and Erikson's speak, and forget it when we are apart; I may have perceived those celestial perfumes and have beheld marvels, and yet know nothing of them here."

"What has most surprised me since I first knew her," said the pastor to Wilfrid, "is that she should allow you to approach her."

"To approach her!" said the stranger. "She has never allowed me to kiss nor even to touch her hand. The first time I saw her she abashed me by her look, and said, 'You are welcome here; you were due to come.' It was as though she knew me. I trembled.—My fear makes me believe in her."

"And my love," said Minna, without a blush.

"Are you making fun of me?" said the pastor, laughing with good humor; "you, my child, in calling yourself a Spirit of Love; and you, sir, in making yourself out to be a Spirit of Wisdom?"

He drank off a glass of beer, and did not observe a singular look which Wilfrid gave to Minna.

"Jesting apart," Becker went on, "I was greatly amazed to hear that those two crazy girls had gone to-day for the first time to the top of the Falberg; but is not that some exaggeration? The girls must have simply climbed some hill; the summit of the Falberg is inaccessible."

"Father," said Minna, in some agitation, "I must then have been in the power of the demon; for I climbed the Falberg with him."

"This is a serious matter," said the pastor. "Minna has never told a lie."

"My dear sir," said Wilfrid, "I can assure you, Seraphita exerts the most extraordinary power over me; I know not what words can give any idea of it. She has told me things which no one but I could know."

"Somnambulism!" cried the old man. "Various cases of that kind are reported by Jean Wier as phenomena easy to account for, and known of old in Egypt."

"Lend me the theosophical works of Swedenborg," said Wilfrid. "I long to plunge into those lakes of light; you have made me thirst for them."

Pastor Becker handed a volume to Wilfrid, who immediately began to read. It was about nine o'clock in the evening. The maid had just brought in the supper, and Minna made the tea. The meal ended, all three sat silently occupied; the pastor read Jean Wier's "Treatise on Demonology;" Wilfrid lost himself in the study of Swedenborg; Minna sewed and dreamed over her recollections. It was a thoroughly Norwegian scene, a peaceful, studious evening, full of thought—a flower under the snow. Wilfrid, as he read the writings of the prophet, was alive only to his inward senses. Now and again the pastor, with a half-serious, half-ironical gesture, pointed him out to Minna, who smiled rather sadly. To Minna, Seraphitus smiled down upon them, floating above the cloud of tobacco smoke in which they were wrapped.

Midnight struck. Suddenly the outer door was violently

pushed open; heavy but hasty steps, the steps of a terrified old man, were heard in the sort of small hall between the two doors. Then David burst into the room.

"Violence! Violence!" he cried. "Come! all of you, come! The Satans are unchained; they wear mitres of flame! Adonis, Vertumnus, the Sirens! They are tempting her as Jesus was tempted on the mountain. Come and drive them out."

"Do you recognize the language of Swedenborg, pure and unmixed?" said the pastor, laughing.

But Wilfrid and Minna were gazing in terror at old David, who, with streaming hair and wild eyes, his legs trembling, and covered with snow, stood shaking as if he were buffeted by a stormy wind.

"What has happened?" asked Minna.

"Well, the Satans hope and purpose to conquer her."

The words made Wilfrid's heart beat.

"For nearly five hours she has been standing up with her eyes raised to heaven, her arms uplifted; she is in torment; she calls upon God. I cannot cross the line; hell has set Vertumni to guard it. They have raised a barrier of iron between her and her old David. If she wants me, what can I do? Help me! Come and pray!"

The poor old man's despair was terrible to behold.

"The glory of God protects her; but if she were to yield to violence?" he said, with persuasive good faith.

"Silence, David, do not talk so wildly. These are facts to be verified.—We will go with you," said the pastor, "and you will see that there are neither Vertumni in the house, nor Satans, nor Sirens."

"Your father is blind," David whispered to Minna.

Wilfrid, on whom his first reading of a treatise by Swedenborg, hasty as it had been, had produced a powerful effect, was already in the passage putting on his snow-shoes. Minna was ready in a moment. They rushed off to the Swedish Castle, leaving the two old men to follow.

"Do you hear that cracking?" said Wilfrid.

"The ice is moving in the fiord," said Minna; "the spring will soon be here."

Wilfrid said no more. When they were in the courtyard, they both felt that they had no right, no strength, to enter the house.

"What do you think of her?" asked Wilfrid.

"What a blaze of light!" cried Minna, standing in front of the drawing-room window. "There he is—great God! and how beautiful! Oh, my Seraphitus, take me to thee!"

The girl's outcry was inward and inaudible. She saw Seraphitus standing lightly shrouded in an opal-tinted mist, which was diffused for a short distance all about the apparently phosphorescent body.

"How lovely she is!" was Wilfrid's mental exclamation.

Pastor Becker now came up with David; he saw his daughter and the stranger in front of the window, came close to them, looked into the room, and said:

"Well, David, she is saying her prayers."

"But try to go in, sir."

"Why disturb her when she is praying?" replied the pastor.

At this moment a ray of moonlight from beyond the Falberg fell on the window. They all looked round, startled by this natural phenomenon; but when they turned again to look at Seraphita, she had vanished.

"That is strange!" said Wilfrid in surprise.

"But I hear exquisite strains," said Minna.

"Well, what next?" said the pastor; "she is going to bed, no doubt."

David had gone in. They walked home in silence; all three interpreted this vision in a different sense. Pastor Becker felt doubt; Minna felt adoration; Wilfrid, desire.

Wilfrid was a man of six-and-thirty. Though built on a large scale, he was not ill-proportioned. He was of a middle height, like most men who are superior to the common herd; his chest and shoulders were broad, and his neck was short,

as in men whose heart is near their head; he had thick, fine black hair, and his eyes, of a tawny brown, had a sunny sparkle in them that showed how eagerly his nature absorbed light. If his strong and irregular features were lacking in that internal calm which is given by a life free from storms, they revealed the inexhaustible forces of ardent senses and instinctive appetites; just as his movements showed the perfection of physical structure, adaptability of nature, and responsive action. This man might hold his own with the savage; might hear, as he does, the footfall of the enemy in the depths of the forest, scent his trail in the air, and see a friendly signal on the remote horizon. His sleep was light, like that of creatures alert against surprise. His frame quickly adapted itself to the climate of any country whither his stormy life might lead him. Art and Science alike would have admired this organization as a sort of human model; everything was truly balanced, heart and movement, intelligence and will.

At first sight he might seem to be classed with those purely instinctive beings who abandon themselves wholly to material needs; but, early in life, he had made his way in the social world to which his feelings had committed him; reading had raised his intelligence, meditation had improved his mind, science had expanded his understanding. He had studied the laws of humanity, and the play of interests moved to action by the passions, and he seemed to have been long familiar with the abstract notions on which society is founded. He had grown pale over books, which are human actions in death; he had kept late hours in the midst of festivities in many a European capital; he had waked up in many strange beds; he had slept perhaps on a battle-field on the night before the fight, and the night after a victory; his tempestuous youth might have tossed him on to the deck of a pirate ship in the most dissimilar quarters of the globe; thus he was experienced in living human action. So he knew the present and the past; both chapters of history—that of the elder and that of the present time.

Many men have been, like Wilfrid, equally strong of hand, heart, and brain; and, like him, they have generally misused this threefold power.

But though this man's outward husk was still akin to the scum of humanity, he certainly belonged no less to the sphere where force is intelligent. Notwithstanding the wrappers in which his soul was shrouded, there were in him those indescribable symptoms visible to the eye of the pure-hearted, of children whose innocence has never felt the blighting breath of evil passions, of old men who have triumphed over theirs; and these signs revealed a Cain to whom hope yet remained, and who seemed to be seeking absolution at the ends of the earth. Minna suspected the slave of glory in this man; Seraphita recognized it; both admired and pitied him. Whence had they this intuition? Nothing can be simpler or, at the same time, more extraordinary. As soon as man desires to penetrate the secrets of nature, where there is no real secret, all that is needed is sight; he can see that the marvelous is the outcome of the simple.

"Seraphitus," said Minna, one evening a few days after Wilfrid's arrival at Jarvis, "you read this stranger's soul, while I have only a vague impression of him. He freezes or he warms me; but you seem to know the reason of this frost and this heat; you can tell me, for you know all about him."

"Yes, I have seen the causes," said Seraphitus, his heavy eyelids closing over his eyes.

"By what power?" asked the inquisitive Minna.

"I have the gift of specialism," he replied. "Specialism constitutes a sort of inward vision which penetrates all things, and you can understand its processes only by a comparison. In the great cities of Europe, where works of art are produced by which the human hand endeavors to represent the effects of moral nature as well as those of physical nature, there are some sublime geniuses who express their ideas in marble. The sculptor works on the marble; he shapes it, and puts into it a world of thought. There are such marbles to which the hand of man has given the power of representing a wholly sublime or a wholly evil aspect of humanity; most beholders

see in these a human figure and nothing more; others, a little higher in the scale of human beings, discern some part of the thoughts rendered by the sculptor, and admire the form; but those who are initiated into the secrets of Art are in sympathy with the sculptor; when they see his work they recognize in it the whole world of his thoughts. These are the princes of Art; they bear in themselves a mirror in which nature is reflected with all its most trifling details.

"Well, in me there is a mirror in which moral nature is reflected with all its causes and effects. I can read the past and the future by thus looking into the conscience. You still ask me how? Suppose the marble to be a man's body, and the sculptor to be feeling passion, vice, or crime, virtue, error, or repentance; then you will understand how I could read the stranger's soul, though you will not understand specialism; to imagine what that gift is you must possess it."

Though Wilfrid was akin to both the primitive and widely different types of men—men of might and men of mind—his excesses, his stormy life, and his sins had often shown him the way of faith; for doubt has two sides—the side of light and the side of darkness. Wilfrid had too thoroughly squeezed the world in both its aspects—matter and spirit—not to have felt the thirst of the unknown, the longing for the Beyond which comes to most men who have knowledge, power, and will. But neither his knowledge, nor his actions, nor his will had due guidance. He had escaped from social life from necessity, as a criminal flies to the cloister. Remorse, the virtue of the weak, could not touch him. Remorse is impotence; it will sin again. Only repentance is strong; it can end everything. But Wilfrid, in traveling through the world, which he had made his sanctuary, nowhere found balm for his wounds; nowhere had he found a nature to which he could attach himself. Despair had dried up in him the well-spring of desire. His was one of those spirits which, having come to a conflict with passion, have proved themselves the stronger, and so have nothing left to clutch in their talons; spirits which, the opportunity failing them for putting them-

selves at the head of their peers to trample a whole people under their horse's hoofs, would pay the price of a dreadful martyrdom for the gift of a faith to be wrecked upon; like lofty rocks waiting for the touch of a staff which never comes, to enable them to shed springs of running water.

Tossed among the snows of Norway by one of the purposes of his restless and inquiring life, the winter had taken him by surprise at Jarvis. On the day when he first saw Seraphita, the meeting wiped out all memories of his past life. This girl gave him such intense agitation as he had fancied was dead for ever. The ashes burst into flame again, and were blown away by the first breath of that voice. Who has known what it is to become young and pure again after growing cold with age and foul with impurities? Wilfrid loved suddenly, as he had never loved; he loved in secret, with faith and awe and hidden frenzies. His life was disturbed to its very source at the mere thought of seeing Seraphita. When he heard her speak, he was borne away to unknown worlds; he was dumb in her presence—she bewitched him.

Here, under the snows, amid the ice-fields, this heavenly flower had blossomed on the stem—the flower to which his hopes went up, till now deceived, whose mere presence gave rise to the new aspirations, the ideas, the feelings, that crowd around us to lift us up to higher realms, as angels transport the elect to heaven in the symbolical pictures suggested to painters by some familiar spirit. Celestial odors softened the granite of this rock, light endowed with language poured forth the divine melodies which escort the pilgrim on his way to heaven. Having drained the cup of earthly love and crushed it with his teeth, he now saw the cup of election, sparkling with limpid waters, the chalice that gives a thirst for unfading joys to all who approach it with lips of faith so ardent that the crystal does not break at their touch. He had met with the walls of brass he had been seeking throughout the world that he might climb them.

He flew to Seraphita, intending to express to her the vehemence of a passion under which he was plunging, like the

horse in the story under the bronze rider whom nothing can move, who sits firm, and whose weight grows greater as the fiery steed tries to throw him. He went to tell her his life, to display the greatness of his soul by the greatness of his sins, to show her the ruins in his desert. But as soon as he had entered the precincts, and found himself in the vast domain surveyed by those eyes whose heavenly blue knew no limits in the present or in the past, he became as calm and submissive as a lion when, rushing on his prey in the African plain, he scents a love message on the wings of the breeze, and stands still. A gulf opened before him in which the words of his delirium were lost, and whence a voice came up that transformed him: he was a boy again, a boy of sixteen, shy and bashful before this maiden of the tranquil brow, this white creature whose immovable calm was like the stern impassibility of human justice. And the struggle had never ceased till this evening when, with a single look, she had at length stricken him down like a hawk, which, after describing bewildering spirals round its prey, makes it drop stunned before carrying it off to its eyrie.

We have long struggles with ourself, of which the outcome is one of our actions; they are, as it were, the inner side of human nature. This inner side is God's; the outer side belongs to men.

More than once had Seraphita chosen to show Wilfrid that she knew that motley inner part which forms the second life of most men. She had often said to him, in her dove-like tone, when Wilfrid had vowed on the way up that he would carry her off to be his own possession, "Why so much vehemence?" Wilfrid, when alone, was strong enough to utter the cry of rebellion he had given vent to at Pastor Becker's, to be soothed by the old man's narrative. This man—a mocker, a scorner—at last saw the light of a starlike belief rising in his darkness; he wondered whether Seraphita were not an exile from the upper spheres on her homeward road. He did not offer this Norwegian lily the homage of such idealization as lovers of every land are apt to squander; he really believed in her divinity.

Why was she buried in the depths of this fiord? What was she doing there? Unanswerable questions crowded on his mind. What could happen between him and her? What fate had led him hither?

To him Seraphita was the motionless statue, as light as a shade, that Minna had just seen standing on the brink of the abyss. Seraphita could thus confront every abyss, and nothing could hurt her; the line of her brow would be unmoved, the light in her eye would never tremble. His love, then, was without hope, but not without curiosity.

From the first moment when Wilfrid suspected the ethereal nature in this sorceress, who had told him the secret of his life in harmonious dreams, he resolved to try to subjugate her, to keep her, to steal her from heaven, where perhaps they awaited her. He would be the representative of humanity, of this earth, recapturing their prey. His pride, the only sentiment which can uplift a man for any length of time, would make him rejoice in that triumph for the rest of his life. At the mere thought his blood boiled in his veins, his heart swelled. If he could not succeed, he would crush her. It is so natural to destroy what you cannot get possession of, to deny what you do not understand, to insult what you covet.

Next day Wilfrid, full of the ideas to which the extraordinary spectacle he had witnessed had naturally given rise, wanted to cross-question David, and came to see him, making a pretext of his wish for news of Seraphita. Though Pastor Becker thought the poor old man was childish, the stranger trusted to his own perspicacity to guide him in discovering the grains of truth the old serving-man might drop in the torrent of his wandering talk.

David had the rigid but undecided expression of a man of eighty; under his white hair his brow showed deep wrinkles forming broken stratifications, and his whole face was furrowed like the dry bed of a torrent. All his vitality seemed to be concentrated in his eyes, where a spark still gleamed; but that light even was hidden behind clouds, and might be either the fitful activity of a feeble mind, or the stupid glare of in-

toxication. His slow, heavy movements betrayed the chill of old age, and seemed to communicate it to any one who gazed at him for long, for he had the strength of inertia. His narrow intelligence awoke only at the sound of his mistress' voice, at the sight or the thought of her. She was the soul of this merely material wreck. When David was alone you would have thought him a corpse; if Seraphita appeared, or spoke, or was spoken of, the dead rose from the grave and recovered motion and speech.

Never were the dry bones that the breath of God shall revive in the valley of Jehoshaphat—never was that Apocalyptic parable more vividly realized than in this Lazarus perennially called forth from the sepulchre by the voice of this young girl. His mode of speech, always highly figurative, and often incomprehensible, kept the villagers from talking to him; but they greatly respected a mind so far removed from the vulgar routine; it commands the instinctive reverence of common folk.

Wilfrid found David in the outer room apparently asleep, close to the stove. Like a dog recognizing a friend's approach, the old man opened his eyes, saw the stranger, and did not stir.

"Well, where is she?" asked Wilfrid, sitting down by the old man.

David fluttered his fingers in the air to represent the flight of a bird.

"She is not still in pain?" asked Wilfrid.

"None but those beings who are plighted to heaven can suffer without any diminution of their love; that is the seal of true faith," said the old man gravely, like an instrument responding to a chance touch.

"Who tells you to say that?"

"The spirit."

"What happened, after all, last evening? Did you force your way past the Vertumni on guard? Did you steal in between the Mammons?"

"Yes," replied David, waking as if from a dream.

The mist before his eye cleared off under a flash that came from within, and which made it grow gradually as bright as an eagle's, as intelligent as a poet's.

"What then did you see?" asked Wilfrid, amazed at this sudden change.

"I saw Species and Shapes, I heard the Spirit of All Things; I saw the Rebellion of the Wicked, I listened to the words of the Good. Seven devils appeared, seven archangels came down to them. The archangels stood afar, they were veiled, and looked on. The devils were close at hand, they glittered and moved. Mammon was there in a shell of pearl, in the guise of a beautiful naked woman; his body was as dazzling as the snow, no human form can be so perfect; and he said, 'I am all pleasure, and thou shalt possess me!'—Lucifer, the Prince of Serpents, came in his royal attire; he was as a man, as beautiful as an angel, and he said, 'The human race shall serve thee!'—The Queen of the Covetous, she who never restores that which she has taken—the Sea herself appeared in her mantle of green; she opened her bosom and showed her store of gems, she vomited treasures and offered them as a gift; she tossed up waves of sapphire and emerald; her creatures were disturbed, they came forth from their hiding-places and spoke; the fairest of the pearls spread butterflies' wings, she listened, and spoke in sea-melodies, saying, 'We are both daughters of suffering, we are sisters; wait for me; we will fly together; I have only to be changed into a woman.' The bird that has the talons of an eagle and the legs of a lion, the head of a woman and a horse's quarters—the Animal—crouched before her and licked her feet, and promised seven hundred years of plenty to this well-beloved daughter.

"The most formidable of all, the Child, came to her very knee, weeping, and saying, 'Can you forsake me, so feeble and helpless? Mother, stay with me!' He played with the others, he shed idleness in the air; heaven itself might have yielded to his lament. The Virgin of pure song brought music that debauches the soul. The Kings of the East passed

by with their slaves, their armies, and their women; the Wounded clamored for help, the Wretched held out their hands: 'Do not leave us, do not leave us!' was their cry.

"I too cried, 'Do not leave us; we will worship you—only stay!'

"Flowers burst from their seeds, and wrapped her in perfume, which said, 'Stay!' The Giant Anakim came down from Jupiter, bringing Gold and his comrades, and all the Spirits of the astral worlds who had followed him, and they all said, 'We will be thine for seven hundred years.' At last Death got off his pale horse and said, 'I will obey thee!' And they all fell on their faces at her feet; if you could but have seen them! They filled a vast plain, and all cried to her, 'We have fed thee; thou art our child; do not forsake us!'

"Life came up from the red waters and said, 'I will not desert thee!' Then, finding Seraphita speechless, she suddenly blazed like the sun, and exclaimed, 'I am the Light!'—'The light is there!' replied Seraphita, pointing to clouds where the archangels were astir. But she was worn out; Desire had broken her on the rack; she could only cry aloud, 'My God!'

"How many Angelic Spirits who have climbed the hill, and are on the point of reaching the summit, have stumbled on a stone that has made them fall and roll back into the depths!—All these fallen Spirits marveled at her constancy; they stood there a motionless chorus, weeping, and saying, 'Courage!' At last she had triumphed over Desire, unchained to rend her in every Shape and Species. She remained praying; and when she raised her eyes, she saw the feet of the angels flying back to heaven."

"She saw the feet of the angels?" repeated Wilfrid.

"Yes," said the old man.

"This was a dream that she told you?" asked Wilfrid.

"A dream as real as that you are alive," replied David. "I was there."

The old servant's calm conviction struck Wilfrid, who went away, wondering whether these visions were at all less

extraordinary than those of which Swedenborg wrote, and of which he had read the evening before.

"If spirits exist, they must surely act," said he to himself as he went into the manse, where he found the pastor alone.

"My dear pastor," said he, "Seraphita is human only in form, and her form is unaccountable. Do not regard me as mad or in love: conviction cannot be argued away. Convert my belief into a scientific hypothesis, and let us try to understand all this. To-morrow we will go to see her together."

"And then?" said the minister.

"If her eye knows no limitation of space, if her thought is the sight of the intellect, allowing her to apprehend the essence of things and to connect them with the general evolution of the universe; if, in a word, she knows and sees everything, let us get the Pythoness onto her tripod, and compel the eagle to spread its wings, by threats. Help me! I breathe a consuming fire; I must extinguish it, or be devoured by it. In short, I see my prey; I will have it."

"It will be a conquest difficult of achievement," said the minister, "for the poor girl is——"

"Is?"——said Wilfrid.

"Mad," said the pastor.

"I will not dispute her madness," said Wilfrid, "so long as you do not dispute her superiority. Dear Pastor Becker, she has often put me to the blush by her learning. Has she traveled much?"

"From her house to the fiord."

"She has never been away!" cried Wilfrid. "Then she must have read a great deal?"

"Not a page, not a jot. I am the only person in Jarvis who has any books. Swedenborg's writings, the only works in the hamlet, are here; she has never borrowed a single volume."

"Have you ever tried to converse with her?"

"Of what use would it be?"

"No one has dwelt under her roof?"

"She has no friends but you and Minna; no servant but old David."

"And she has never learned anything of Science or Art?"

"From whom?" said the pastor.

"Then, when she discusses such matters very pertinently, as she has often done with me, what would you infer?"

"That the girl may, perhaps, during all these years of silence, have acquired such faculties as were possessed by Apollonius of Tyana, and by certain so-called wizards, who were burned by the Inquisition, which rejected the idea of second sight."

"When she talks Arabic, what can you say?"

"The history of medicine contains many accredited instances of women who spoke languages they did not understand."

"What can I do?" said Wilfrid. "She knows things concerning my past life of which the secret lay in me."

"We will see if she can tell me any thoughts that I have never spoken to any one," said Pastor Becker.

Minna came into the room.

"Well, my child, and how is your Spirit-friend?"

"He is suffering, father," said she, bowing to Wilfrid. "The passions of humanity, tricked out in their false splendor, tortured him in the night, and spread incredible pomp before his eyes.—But you treat all these things as mere fables."

"Fables as delightful to him who reads them in his brain as those of the *Arabian Nights* are to ordinary minds," said her father, smiling.

"Then, did not Satan," she retorted, "transport the Saviour to the summit of the Temple and show Him the kingdoms at His feet?"

"The Evangelists," replied Becker, "did not so effectually correct their text but that several versions exist."

"You, then, believe in the reality of these apparitions?" Wilfrid asked of Minna.

"Who can doubt that hears him tell of them?"

"Him?—Who?" asked Wilfrid.

"He who dwells there," said Minna, pointing to the castle.

"You speak of Seraphita?" said Wilfrid, surprised.

The girl hung her head, with a gentle but mischievous glance at him.

"Yes, you too take pleasure in confusing my mind.—Who is she? What is your idea of her?"

"What I feel is inexplicable," said Minna, coloring.

"You are both mad!" said the pastor.

"Then we meet to-morrow," said Wilfrid, as he left.

IV

THE CLOUDS OF THE SANCTUARY

THERE are spectacles to which all the material magnificence at man's command is made to contribute. Whole tribes of slaves or divers go forth to seek in the sands of the sea, in the bowels of the rocks, the pearls and diamonds that adorn the spectators. These treasures, handed down from heir to heir, have blazed on crowned heads, and might be the most veracious historians of humanity if they could but speak. Have they not seen the joys and woes of the greatest as well as of the humblest? They have been everywhere—worn with pride at high festivals; carried in despair to the money-lender; stolen amid blood and pillage; treasured in miracles of artistic workmanship contrived for their safe keeping. Excepting Cleopatra's pearl, not one has perished.

The great and the rich are assembled to see a king crowned —a monarch whose raiment is the work of men's hands, but who, in all his glory, is arrayed in purple less exquisite than that of a humble flower. These festivities, blazing with light, bathed in music through which the words of men strive to be heard in thunder,—all these works of man can be crushed by a thought, a feeling. The mind of man can bring

to his ken light more glorious, can make him hear more tuneful harmonies, show him among clouds the glittering constellations he may question; and the heart can do yet more! Man may stand face to face with a single being and find in a single word, a single look, a burden so heavy to be borne, a light so intense, a sound so piercing, that he can but yield and kneel. The truest splendors are not in outward things, but in ourselves.

To a learned man, is not some secret of science a whole new world of wonders? But do the clarions of force, the gems of wealth, the music of triumph, the concourse of the crowd, do honor to his joy? No. He goes off to some remote nook, where a man, often pale and feeble, whispers a single word in his ear. That word, like a torch in an underground passage, lights up the whole of science.

Every human conception, arrayed in the most attractive forms that mystery can invent, once gathered round a blind man sitting in the mud by a roadside. The three worlds—the Natural, Spiritual, and Divine—were revealed to an unhappy Florentine exile; as he went he was escorted by the happy and by the suffering, by those who prayed and those who cursed, by angels and by the damned. When He who came from God, who knew and could do all things, appeared to three of His disciples, it was one evening at the common table of a poor little inn; there and then the Light broke forth, bursting material husks, and showing its spiritual power. They saw Him in His glory, and the earth clung to their feet no more than as the sandals they could slip off them.

The pastor, Wilfrid, and Minna were all three excited to alarm at going to the house of the extraordinary being they proposed to question. To each of them the Swedish castle was magnified into the scene of a stupendous spectacle, like those of which the composition and color are so skilfully arranged by poets, where the actors, though imaginary to men, are real to those who are beginning to enter into the spiritual world. On the seats of that amphitheatre the pastor beheld arrayed the dark legions of doubt, his gloomy ideas, his vicious

syllogisms in argument; he called up the various philosophical and religious sects, ever contentious, and all embodied in the shape of a fleshless system, as lean as the figure of Time as imagined by man—the old mower who with one hand raises the scythe, and in the other carries a meagre world, the world of human life.

Wilfrid saw there his first illusions and his last hopes; he imagined human destiny incarnate there and all its struggles; religion and its triumphant hierarchies.

Minna vaguely found heaven there, seen through a vista; love held up a curtain embroidered with mystical figures, and the harmonious sounds that fell on her ears increased her curiosity. Hence this evening was to them what the supper at Emmaus was to the three travelers, what a vision was to Dante, what an inspiration was to Homer; to them, too, the three aspects of the world were to be revealed, veils rent, doubts dispelled, darkness lightened. Human nature in all its phases, and awaiting illumination, could find no better representatives than this young girl, this man, and these two elders, one of them learned enough to be sceptical, the other ignorant enough to believe. No scene could be simpler in appearance or more stupendous in fact.

On entering, shown in by old David, they found Seraphita standing by the table, on which were spread the various items constituting a Tea, a meal which takes the place in the north of the pleasures of wine-drinking, reserved for southern lands. Nothing certainly betrayed in her—or in him—a wondrous being who had the power of appearing under two distinct forms, nothing that showed the various forces she could command. With a homely desire to make her three guests comfortable, Seraphita bid David to feed the stove with wood.

"Good-evening, neighbors," said she. "Dear Pastor Becker, you did well to come; you see me alive, perhaps, for the last time. This winter has killed me.—Be seated, pray," she added to Wilfrid.—"And you, Minna, sit there," and she pointed to an armchair near the young man. "You have brought your work, I see. Did you find out the stitch? The

pattern is very pretty. For whom is it to be? For your father or for this gentleman?" and she turned to Wilfrid. "We must not allow him to leave without some remembrance of the damsels of Norway."

"Then you were in pain again yesterday?" asked Wilfrid.

"That is nothing," she replied. "Such pain makes me glad; it is indispensable to escape from life."

"Then you are not afraid of dying?" said the minister, smiling, for he did not believe in her illness.

"No, dear pastor; there are two ways of dying—to some death means victory, to some it is defeat."

"And you think you have won?" said Minna.

"I do not know," said she. "Perhaps it is only a step more."

The milky radiance of her brow seemed to fade, her eyes fell under her lids, which slowly closed. This simple circumstance distressed the three inquirers, who sat quite still. The pastor was the boldest.

"My dear girl," said he, "you are candor itself; you are also divinely kind. I want more of you this evening than the dainties of your tea-table. If we may believe what some people say, you know some most wonderful things; and if so, would it not be an act of charity to clear up some of our doubts?"

"Oh yes!" said Seraphita, with a smile. "They say that I walk on the clouds; I am on familiar terms with the eddies in the fiord; the sea is a horse I have saddled and bridled; I know where the singing flower grows, where the talking light shines, where living colors blaze that scent the air; I have Solomon's ring; I am a fairy; I give my orders to the wind, and it obeys me like a submissive slave; I can see the treasures in the mine; I am the virgin whom pearls rush to meet, and——"

"And we walk unharmed on the Falberg," Minna put in.

"What, you too?" replied the Being with a luminous glance at the girl, which quite upset her. "If I had not the power of reading through your brows the wish that has brought you

here, should I be what you think I am?" she went on, including them all in her captivating gaze, to David's great satisfaction, and he went off rubbing his hands.—"Yes," she went on after a pause, "you all came overflowing with childish curiosity. You, my dear pastor, wondered whether it were possible that a girl of seventeen should know even one of the thousand secrets which learned men seek diligently with their noses to the ground instead of with their eyes raised to heaven! Now, if I were to show you how and where plant life and animal life mingle, you would begin to doubt your doubts.—You plotted to cross-question me, confess?"

"Yes, beloved Seraphita," said Wilfrid. "But is not such a desire natural to man?"

"And do you want to worry this child?" she said, laying her hand on Minna's hair with a caressing gesture.

The girl looked up, and seemed to long to be merged in the Being before her.

"The word is given for all," the mysterious Being went on very gravely. "Woe to him who should keep silence even in the midst of the desert, thinking that none would hear. Everything speaks, everything hears here below. The word moves worlds.—I hope, Pastor Becker, not to speak in vain. I know what difficulties trouble you most: would it not be a miracle if I could at once apprehend all the past experiences of your conscience? Well, that miracle will be accomplished. —Listen to me: you have never confessed your doubts in their full extent; I alone, immovable in my faith, can set them before you, and frighten you at your own image. You are on the darkest declivity of doubt. You do not believe in God, and everything on earth is of secondary importance to the man who attacks the first cause of everything.

"Let us set aside the discussions thrashed out without result by false philosophers. Generations of Spiritualists have made no less vain efforts to disprove the existence of matter than generations of Materialists have made to disprove the existence of the Spirit. Why these contests? Does not man, as he is, afford undeniable proofs of both? Is he not an

union of matter and spirit? Only a madman can refuse to find an atom of matter in the human frame; when it is decomposed, natural science finds no difference between its elements and those of other animals. The idea which is produced in man by the power of comparing several different objects, on the other hand, does not seem to come within the domain of matter. On this I give no opinion; we have to deal with your doubts, not with my convictions.

"But to you, as to most thoughtful men, the relations which you have the faculty of discerning between things, of which the real existence is made certain to you through your senses, do not, I suppose, seem *material.* The natural Universe, then, of things and beings meets in man with the supernatural Universe of likeness or difference which he can discern between the innumerable forms in nature—relations so various that they seem to be infinite; for if, till the present day, no one has been able to enumerate the created things of this earth only, what man can ever enumerate their relations to each other? Is not the small fraction with which you are familiar, in regard to the grand total, as an unit to the infinite?

"Hence here you find yourself already made aware of the existence of the infinite, and this necessarily leads you to conceive of a purely spiritual sphere. Hence, too, man is in himself sufficient evidence of these two modes of life: Matter and Spirit. In him ends a finite, visible universe; in him begins an infinite and invisible universe—two worlds that do not know each other. Have the pebbles of the fiord any cognizance of their relative shapes, are they conscious of the colors seen in them by the eye of man, do they hear the music of the ripples that dance over them? Let us then leap the gulf we cannot fathom, the unthinkable union of a material with a spiritual universe, the concept of a visible, ponderable, tangible creation, conterminous with an invisible, imponderable, intangible creation; absolutely dissimilar, separated by a void, united by indisputable points of contact, and meeting in a being who belongs to both! Let us, I say,

mingle in one world these two worlds, which, in your philosophy, can never coalesce, and which, in fact, do coalesce.

"However abstract man may call it, the relation which binds two things together must stamp its mark. Where? On what? We have not now to inquire to what degree of rarity matter may be reduced. If that were indeed the question, I do not see why He who has linked the stars together at immeasurable distances by physical laws, to veil His face withal, should not have created substances that could think, nor why you will not allow that He should have given thought a body.

"To you, then, your invisible, moral, or mental universe, and your visible, physical universe, constitute one and the same matter. We will not divide bodies from their properties, nor objects from their relations. Everything that exists, that weighs upon and overwhelms us from above and beneath us, before us or within us; all that our eyes or our minds apprehend, all that is named or nameless, must, to reduce the problem of Creation to the standard of your logic, be a finite mass of matter; if it were infinite, God could not be its master. Thus, according to you, dear pastor, by whatever scheme you propose to introduce God, who is infinite, into this finite mass of matter, God could no longer exist with such attributes as are ascribed to Him by man. If we seek Him through facts, He is not; if we seek Him through reason, still He is not; both spiritually and materially God is impossible. Let us hearken to the word of human reason driven to its utmost consequences.

"If we now conceive of God face to face with this stupendous whole, we find only two conditions of relationship possible: Either God and Matter were contemporaneous, or God was alone and pre-existent. If all the wisdom that has enlightened the human race from the first day of its existence could be collected in one vast brain, that monstrous brain could invent no third mode of being, short of denying both God and Matter. Human philosophers may pile up mountains of words and ideas. Religions may accumulate

emblems and beliefs, revelations and mysteries, still we are forced on to this terrible dilemma, and must choose one of the two propositions it offers. However, you have not much choice, for each leads the human mind to scepticism.

"The problem being thus stated, what signifies Spirit or Matter? What does it signify which way the worlds are moving if once the Being who guides them is proved to be absurd? Of what use is it to inquire whether man is advancing towards heaven or coming back from it, whether Creation is tending upwards towards the spirit, or downwards towards matter, if the worlds we question can give no answer? Of what consequence are theogonies and their armies, theologies and their dogmas, when, whichever alternative man chooses in answer to the problem, his God is no more?

"Let us examine the first: Suppose God and matter to have been co-existent from the beginning. Can He be God who suffers the action and co-existence of a substance that is not Himself? On this theory God is but a secondary agent constrained to organize matter. Who constrained Him? And as between that coarser other half and Him, who was to decide? Who paid the Great Workman for the six days' labor attributed to Him? If there were, indeed, some coercing force which was neither God nor matter, if God were compelled to make the machinery of the universe, it would be no less absurd to call Him God than to call a slave set to turn a mill a Roman citizen. And, in fact, the difficulty is just as insoluble in the case of that Supreme Intelligence as in that of God Himself. It only carries the problem a step further back; and is not this like the Indian philosophers, who place the world on a tortoise, and the tortoise on an elephant, but cannot say on what their elephant's feet rest? Can we conceive that this Supreme Will, evolved from the conflict of God with matter—this God greater than God—should have existed during eternity without Willing what He Willed, granting that eternity can be divided into two periods? Wherever God may be, if He knew not what His future Will would be, what becomes of

His intuitive perceptions? And of these two eternities, which is the superior—uncreated eternity or created eternity?

"If God from all eternity willed that the world should be what it is, this fresh view of necessity, which is in harmony no doubt with the motion of a Sovereign Intelligence, implies the co-eternity of matter. Whether matter be co-eternal by the Divine Will, which must at all times be at one with itself, or whether it be independently co-eternal, since the power of God must be absolute, it perishes if He has not His free-will. He would always have found within Himself a supreme reason which would have ruled Him. Is God God if He cannot separate Himself from the works of His creation in subsequent as well as in anterior eternity?

"This aspect of the problem is then insoluble so far as cause is concerned. Let us examine it in its effects.

"If God the Creator, under compulsion to create the universe from all eternity, is inconceivable, He is no less so as perpetually one with His work. God, eternally constrained to exist in His creatures, is no less dishonored than in His former position as a workman. Can you conceive of a God who can no more be independent of His work than dependent on it? Can He destroy it without treason to Himself? Consider and make your choice: Whether He should some day destroy it, or not destroy it; either alternative is equally fatal to attributes, without which He cannot subsist. Is the world a mere experiment, a perishable mould which must be destroyed? Then God must be inconsistent and impotent. Inconsistent—for ought He not to have known the issue before making the experiment, and why does He delay destroying that which is to be destroyed? Impotent—or how else could He have created an imperfect world?

"And if an imperfect creation belies the faculties that man ascribes to God, let us, on the other hand, suppose it to be perfect. This idea is in harmony with our conception of a God of supreme intelligence who could make no mistake; but, then, why any deterioration? Why Regeneration? Then a perfect world is necessarily indestructible, its forms must be

imperishable: it can neither advance nor retrocede: it rolls on in an eternal orbit whence it can never deviate. Thus is God dependent on His work: thus it is co-eternal with Him, which brings us back to one of the propositions which most audaciously attacks God. If the universe is imperfect, it allows of advance and progress: if perfect, it is stationary. If it is impossible to conceive of a progressive God, not knowing from all eternity what the result would be of His creation, can we then admit a stationary God? Would not that be the apotheosis of matter, the greatest possible negation? Under the first hypothesis, God deceases by want of power; under the second, He deceases by the force of inertia.

"Hence, alike in the conception and the execution of creation, to every honest mind the notion of matter as contemporaneous with God is a denial of God.

"Compelled to choose between these two aspects of the question, in order to govern the nations, many generations of great thinkers have chosen the second. This gave rise to the dogma of two moral elements, as conceived of by the Magians, which has spread in Europe under the image of Satan contending with the Father of all. But are not this dogmatic formula and the endless deifications that are derived from it crimes of high treason to the divine Majesty? By what other name can we call a belief that makes the personification of Evil the rival of God, for ever struggling in the throes of a supreme intellect without any hope of victory? The laws of statics show that two forces thus placed must neutralize each other.

"Now, turn to the other side of the problem: God was pre-existent and alone.

"We need not reproduce the former arguments, which are equally strong in relation to the division of eternity into two periods—uncreated and created. We will also set aside the question of the motion or the immobility of worlds, and restrict ourselves to the inherent difficulties of this second thesis.

"If God pre-existed alone, the universe proceeded from

Him; matter is the emanation of His essence. Then matter is not. Every form is but a veil hiding the Divine Spirit. Then, the world is eternal; then, the world is God! But is not this formula even more fatal than the former one to the attributes assigned to God by human reason? Does matter, as emanating from God, and always one with Him, account for the existing conditions of matter? How are we to believe that the Almighty, supremely good in His nature and His acts, could beget things so unlike Himself that He is not in all things and everywhere the same? Were there in Him certain evil constituents which He rejected from Him?—A conjecture more terrible than offensive or ridiculous, inasmuch as it includes the two theorems which, in our former argument, we proved to be inadmissible. God must be One, and cannot divide Himself without infringing the most important of His attributes. Is it possible to conceive of a portion of God which is not God?

"This hypothesis seemed so impious to the Roman Church, that she made God's Omnipresence, even in the smallest fragments of the Eucharist, an article of Faith.

"How, then, are we to conceive of an Omnipotent Intelligence which yet cannot conquer? How unite it with Nature unless by direct conquest? But Nature seeks and combines, reproduces, dies, and is born again; it is even more agitated in the creative effort than when all is in a state of fusion; it suffers and groans; it is ignorant, degenerate, does evil, makes mistakes, destroys itself, disappears, and begins again. How are we to justify the almost universal eclipse of the Divine element? Why is Death? Why was the spirit of evil, the monarch of this earth, sent forth from a supremely good God—good alike in His essence and His faculties, who could have produced nothing that was not like Himself?

"And if, setting aside this relentless issue which leads us at once to the absurd, we go into details, what purpose can we ascribe to the world? If all is God, all is at once effect and cause; or more accurately, cause and effect do not exist. Like God, all is one; and you can discern no starting-point

and no end. Can the real end be, possibly, a rotation of matter growing more and more rare? But whatever the end may be, is not the mechanism of such matter proceeding from God and returning to God, a mere child's plaything? Why should He embody Himself so grossly? Under what form is God most completely God? Which wins the day, spirit or matter, when neither of those modes of being can be wrong? Who can possibly discern God in this perennial toil by which He divides Himself into two natures—one omniscient, the other knowing nothing? Can you conceive of God as playing at being man, laughing His own labors to scorn, dying on Friday to rise again on Sunday, and carrying on the farce from age to age while knowing the end from all eternity; and never telling Himself, the Creature, what He is doing as Creator?

"The God of the former hypothesis, null as He is by sheer inertia, seems more possible—if we had to choose between impossibilities—than that stupid mocking God who destroys Himself when two portions of humanity meet weapon in hand. Comical as this ultimate expression of the second aspect of the problem may be, it was that chosen by half the human race among nations that had created certain gay mythologies. These amorous nations were consistent; to them everything was a God, even fear and its cowardice, even crime and its bacchanals. If we accept Pantheism, the faith of some great human geniuses, who can tell where reason lies? Is it with the savage running free in the desert, clothed in his nakedness, lordly and always right in his actions whatever they may be, listening to the sun and talking to the sea? Is it with the civilized man, whose greatest pleasures are due to falsehoods, who hews and hammers Nature to make the gun he carries on his shoulder, who has applied his intelligence to hasten the hour of his death, and create maladies that taint his pleasures? When the scourge of pestilence, or the ploughshare of war, or the genius of the desert had passed over a spot of earth, annihilating everything, which came off best—the Nubian savage or the patrician of Thebes?

"Your scepticism permeates from above downwards. Your doubts include everything, the end as well as the means. If the physical world seems inexplicable, the moral world proves even more against God. Where, then, is progress? If everything goes on improving, why do we die as children? Why do not nations, at any rate, perpetuate themselves? Is the world that proceeded from God, that is contained in God, stationary? Do we live but once? Or do we live for ever? If we live but once, coerced by the advance of the Great All, of which we have no knowledge given us, let us do what we will! If we are eternal, let everything pass! Can the creature be guilty because it exists when changes are going on? If it sins at the moment of some great transformation, shall it be punished for it after having been the victim? What becomes of divine goodness if it refuses to place us at once in the realms of happiness—if such there be? What becomes of God's foreknowledge if He does not know the results of the trials to which He subjects us? What is this alternative proposed to man by all His creeds, between stewing in an eternal caldron and wandering in a white robe with a palm in his hand and a halo to crown him? Can this pagan invention be the supreme promise of God?

"And what magnanimous spirit but sees how unworthy of man and God alike is virtue out of self-interest, the eternity of joys offered by every creed to those who, during a few brief hours of existence, fulfil certain monstrous and often unnatural conditions? Is it not preposterous to endow man with vehement senses and then forbid his gratifying them?

"Besides, to what end these trivial objections when good and evil alike are negatived? Does evil exist? If matter in all its manifestations is evil, evil is God.

"The faculty of reason, as well as the faculty of feeling, being bestowed on man for his use, nothing can be more pardonable than to seek a meaning in human suffering and to inquire into the future; if this rigid and rigorous logic leads us to such conclusions, what confusion is here! The world has then no stability; nothing moves on, and nothing stands

still; everything changes, but nothing is destroyed; everything renews itself and reappears; for, if your mind cannot unanswerably prove an end, it is equally impossible to prove the annihilation of the smallest atom of matter: it may be transformed, but not destroyed. Though blind force may prove the atheist's position, intelligent force is inscrutable; for, if it proceeds from God, ought it to encounter any obstacles; ought it not to conquer them immediately?

"Where is God? If the living are not aware of Him, will the dead find Him?

"Crumble into dust, O idolatries and creeds! Fall, O too feeble keystones of the social arches, for ye have never retarded the destruction, the death, the oblivion, that have come upon all the nations of the past, however securely they were founded. Fall, O morality and justice! Our crimes are but relative, they are divine results of which the causes are unknown to us! Everything is God. Either we are God, or God is not! Child of an age of which each year has left on your brow the cold touch of its scepticism—Old Man! this is the sum total of your science and your long meditations!

"Dear Pastor Becker, you have rested your head on the pillow of doubt, finding it the easiest solution, acting indeed like the majority of the human race. They say to themselves, 'We will think no more of this question if God will not vouchsafe us an algebraic demonstration for its solution, while He has given us so many that lead us safely up from the earth to the stars——'

"Now, are not these your secret thoughts? Have I missed them? Have I not, on the contrary, precisely stated them?—Either the dogma of the two elementary principles, an antagonism in which God is destroyed by the very fact that He—who is Almighty—plays at a struggle; or the ridiculous Pantheism in which all things being God, God is no more—these two founts, whence flow the creeds to whose triumph the earth is devoted, are equally pernicious.

"There, between us, lies the two-edged axe with which you behead the white-haired Ancient of Days whom you enthrone on painted clouds!

"Now, give me the axe!"

The pastor and Wilfrid looked at the girl in a sort of dismay.

"Belief," said Seraphita in her gentle voice—for the man had been speaking hitherto—"belief is a gift! Belief is feeling. To believe in God, you must feel God. This sense is a faculty slowly acquired by the human being, as those wonderful powers are acquired which you admire in great men—in warriors, artists, men of science—those who act, those who produce, those who know. Thought, a bundle of the relations which you discern between different things, is an intellectual language that may be learned, is it not? Belief, a bundle of heavenly truths, is in the same way a language, but as far above thought as thought is above instinct. This language too can be learned.

"The believer answers in a single cry, a single sign; faith places in his hand a flaming sword which cuts and throws light on everything. The seer does not come down again from heaven; he contemplates it and is silent. There is a being who both believes and sees, who has knowledge and power, who loves, prays, and waits. That being is resigned, and aspires to the realm of light; he has neither the believer's lofty scorn, nor the Seer's dumbness; he both listens and replies. To him the doubt of the dark ages is not a lethal weapon, but a guiding clue; he accepts the battle in whatever guise; he can accommodate his tongue to every language; he is never wroth, he pities; he neither condemns nor kills, he redeems and comforts; he has not the harshness of an aggressor, but rather the mild fluidity of light which penetrates and warms and lights up every place. In his eyes scepticism is not impiety, is not blasphemy, is not a crime; it is a stage of transition whence a man must go forward towards the light, or back into the darkness.

"So now, dear Pastor, let us reason together. You do not believe in God. Why?—God, as you express it, is incomprehensible and inexplicable. I grant it. I will not retort that to comprehend God altogether is to be God. I will not tell

you that you deny what you think inexplicable simply to give myself a right of affirming what seems to me believable. To you there is an evident fact dwelling within you. In you matter is conterminous with intelligence; and yet you think that human intelligence will end in darkness, in doubt, in nothingness? Even if God seems to you incomprehensible and inexplicable, confess at least that in all physical phenomena you recognize in Him a consistent and exquisite Craftsman.

"Then why should His logic end at man, as His most finished work? Though the question may not be convincing, it deserves some consideration at any rate. Though you deny God, to give a basis to your doubts, you happily can appreciate certain double-edged truths which demolish your arguments as effectually as your arguments demolish God.

"We both admit that matter and spirit are two separate creations, neither of which contains the other; that the spiritual world consists of infinite relations to which the finite material world gives rise; and that whereas no one on earth has ever been able to identify himself by a sheer effort of mind with the sum-total of earthly creations, all the more certainly can he not rise to an apprehension of the relations which the spirit discerns between these creations. So I might end the matter with one blow by denying you the faculty of understanding God, just as you deny the pebbles by the fiord the faculty of counting or of seeing themselves. How do you know that they may not deny the existence of man, though man uses them to build his house with?

"There is one fact which overthrows you—Infinitude. If you feel it within you, how is it that you do not recognize the consequences? Can the finite fully apprehend the infinite? If you cannot comprehend the relations which, by your own admission, are infinite, how can you comprehend the remote finality in which they are summed up? Order, of which the manifestation is one of your needs, being infinite, can your finite reason comprehend it?

"Nor need you inquire why man cannot comprehend all he

can conceive of, for he likewise can conceive of much that he cannot comprehend. If I were to prove to you that your mind is ignorant of everything that lies within its grasp, would you grant me that it is impossible for it to conceive of what lies beyond it? Should I not be justified, then, in saying, 'One of the alternatives which bring God to nought at the bar of your judgment must be true and the other false; Creation exists, you feel the need for an end; must not that end be a noble one? Now, if in man matter is conterminous with intelligence, why can you not be satisfied to grant that human intelligence ends where the light begins of those superior spheres for which is reserved the intuition of the God who, to you, is merely an insoluble problem?

"The species lower than man have no comprehension of the universe; you have. Why should there not be, above man again, species more intelligent than he? Before using his powers to take measure of God, would not man do well to know more about himself? Before defying the stars that give him light, before attacking transcendent truths, ought he not rather to verify the truths that immediately concern him?

"But I should answer the negations of doubt by negation. Well, then, I ask you: Is there here on earth a single thing so self-evident that I am bound to believe in it? I will show you in a minute that you believe firmly in things that can act and yet are not beings, that can give birth to thought and yet are not spirits, in living abstractions which the understanding cannot grasp under any shape, which nowhere exist, but which you can everywhere find; which have no possible names—though you have given them names; which, like the God in human form whom you conceive of, perish before the inexplicable, the incomprehensible, and the absurd. And I will ask you: If you admit these things, why do you reserve your doubts for God?

"You believe in Number as the foundation on which rests the edifice of what you call the exact sciences. Without number mathematics are impossible. Well, then, what impossible being, to whom life everlasting should be granted, could ever

finish counting—and in what sufficiently concise language could he utter—the numbers contained in the infinite number of which the existence is demonstrated by your reason. Ask the greatest human genius, and suppose him to sit for a thousand years leaning on a table, his head in his hands, what would be answer?

"You know neither where number begins, where it pauses, nor where it ends. Now you call it time, anon you call it space; by number only does anything exist; but for number all substance would be one and the same; it alone differentiates and modifies matter. Number is to your mind what it is to matter, an intangible agent. But will you then make a god of it? Is it a being? Is it a breath of God sent forth to organize the material universe, wherein nothing takes shape but as a result of divisibility which is an effect of number? The most minute as well as the most immense objects in creation are distinguished from each other by quantity, quality, dimension, and force,—are not these all conditions of number? That number is infinite is a fact proved to your intellect, but of which no material proof is obtainable. A mathematician will tell you that infinity of number is certain, but cannot be demonstrated. And, my dear Pastor, believers will tell you that God is Number endowed with motion, to be felt but not proved. He, like the unit, is the origin of number though having nothing in common with numbers. The existence of Number depends on that of the unit, which is not a number, but the parent of them all. And God, dear Pastor Becker, is a stupendous Unit, having nothing in common with His creations, but their Parent nevertheless.

"You must grant me that you are equally ignorant as to where number begins or ends, and as to where created eternity begins or ends? Why, then, if you believe in number, should you deny God? Does not creation hold a place between the infinite of inorganic substances and the infinite of the Divine spheres, as the unit stands between the infinite of fractions—lately termed decimals—and the infinite numbers you call whole numbers? Men alone on earth comprehend number,

the first step to the forecourt leading to God, and even there reason stumbles. What! you can neither measure nor grasp the primary abstraction proposed to you, and you want to apply your puny standard to the ends of God's purpose? What if I should cast you into the bottomless depths of Motion, the force which organizes number?

"If I were to tell you that the universe is nothing but Number and Motion, we should already, you see, be speaking a different language. I understand both terms; you do not. What, then, if I should go on to say that motion and number are generated by the Word? This term, the Supreme Reason of seers and prophets, who of old heard the voice of God that overthrew St. Paul, is a laughing-stock to you—you men, though your own visible works—communities, monuments, actions, and passions—all are the outcome of your own feeble Word; and though without speech you would still be no higher than the Orang of the woods, the great ape that is so nearly akin to the Negro.

"Well, you believe firmly in number and motion, inexplicable and incomprehensible as force and result, though I might apply to their existence the same logical dilemma as just now relieved you of the necessity of acknowledging that of God. You, a powerful reasoner, will surely relieve me of the necessity for proving that the Infinite must be everywhere the same, and that it is inevitably one? God alone is the Infinite, for there obviously cannot be two Infinites. If, to use words in their human sense, anything proved to you here on earth strikes you as infinite, you may be sure you have in that a glimpse of one aspect of God.

"To proceed: you have found for yourselves a place in the Infinite of number; you have fitted it to your stature by creating arithmetic—if you can be said to create anything—the basis on which everything is built up, even society. Arithmetic, or the use of number, has organized the moral world, just as number, the only thing in which your professing Atheists believe, organizes physical creation. This science of numbers ought to be absolute, like everything that is intrinsically

true; but it is, in fact, purely relative, it has no absolute existence. You can give no proof of its reality.

"To begin with, though this science is apt at summing up organized substances, it is impotent as applied to organizing forces, since these are infinite, whereas the former are finite. Man, whose intellect can conceive of the Infinite, cannot deal with it as a whole; if he could, he would be God. Hence your arithmetic, as applied to finite things and not to the Infinite, is true in relation to the details you apprehend, but false in relation to the whole which you cannot apprehend. Though nature does not vary in her organizing forces and her elementary causes, which are infinite, she is never the same in her finite results. Hence in all nature you will find no two objects exactly alike.

"Thus, in the order of nature, two and two can never really make four, since the units would have to be exactly equal; and you know that it is impossible to find two leaves alike on one tree, or two specimens alike of the same species of tree. This axiom of arithmetic then, which is false as regards visible nature, is no less false in the invisible nature of your abstractions, where there is the same dissimilarity in your ideas which are derived from the objects of the visible world, only extended in their relations; in fact, differences are even more strongly marked there than elsewhere. Everything there being modified by the temperament, the strength, the manners, and the habits of individuals, who are never alike, the most trifling matters are representative of personal character.

"If man has ever succeeded in creating an unit, it was, no doubt, by assigning equal weight and value to certain pieces of gold. Well, add a rich man's ducat to a poor man's, and tell yourself that to the public treasury these are equal quantities; but in the eyes of a thoughtful man, one, morally speaking, is unquestionably greater than the other; one represents a month's happiness, the other the most transient caprice. Two and two only make four in the sense of a false and monstrous abstraction.

"A fraction, again, has no existence in nature, since what you call a part is a thing complete in itself; and does it not often happen—and have we not proof of the fact—that the hundredth part of some substance may be stronger than what you call the whole? And if a fraction has no existence in the natural world, far less does it exist in the moral world, where ideas and feelings may be as various as the species of the vegetable kingdom, but are always a whole. The theory of fractions, then, is another concession of the mind. Number, with its 'infinitely small' and its 'infinite total,' is a power of which a small part only is known to you, while its extent evades you. You have built a little cottage in the infinitude of number; you have adorned it with hieroglyphics very learnedly designed and painted; and you have said, 'Everything is here!'

"From abstract number we will pass on to number as applied to solids. Your geometry states it as an axiom that a straight line is the shortest way from one point to another; and astronomy shows you that God has given motion only in curves. Here, then, in the same science, are two facts equally well proved—one by the evidence of your senses, aided by the telescope; the other by the testimony of your mind; but one contradicts the other. Man, who is liable to error, asserts one, and the Maker of the worlds—whom you have never found in error—contradicts it. Who can decide between rectilinear and curvilinear geometry?—between the theory of straight lines and the theory of curved lines? If, in His work, the mysterious Maker, who attains His ends with miraculous directness, only makes use of the straight line to divide it at a right angle and obtain a curve, man himself cannot rely on it: the bullet a man wishes to send in a straight line follows a curve, and when you want to hit a point in space with certainty you propel the ball on its cruel parabola. Not one of your learned men has arrived at the simple induction that the curved line is that of the material world, and the straight line that of the spiritual world; that one is the theory of finite creation, and the other the theory of the infinite.

Man alone—he alone here on earth having any consciousness of the infinite—can know the straight line; he alone, in a special organ, has the sense of the vertical. May not the predilection for curved lines in some men be an indication of the impurity of their nature, still too closely allied to the material substances which engender us? and may not the love for straight lines, seen in lofty minds, be in them a presentiment of heaven? Between these two lines lies a gulf as wide as between the Finite and the Infinite, between Matter and Spirit, between Man and the Idea, between Motion and the Thing moved, between the Creature and God. Borrow the wings of Divine Love and you may cross that gulf. Beyond it the revelation of the Word begins!

"The things you call material are nowhere devoid of thickness; lines are the edges of solids having a power of action which you ignore in your theorems, and that makes them false in relation to bodies regarded as a whole; hence the constant destruction of human works, to which you have unwittingly given active properties. Nature knows nothing but solid bodies; your science deals only with combinations of surfaces. And so nature constantly gives the lie to all your laws: can you name one to which no fact makes an exception? The laws of statics are contradicted by a thousand incidents in physics; a fluid overthrows the most stupendous mountains, and so proves that the heaviest substances may be upheaved by imponderable agents. Your laws of acoustics and optics are nullified by the sounds you hear in your brain during sleep, and by the light of an electric flash, of which the rays are often overpowering. You do not know how light is brought to your intelligence, any more than you know the simple and natural process by which it is changed to ruby, sapphire, opal, and emerald on the neck of an Indian bird, while it lies dim and gray on the same bird under the misty sky of Europe, nor why it beams perpetually white here in the heart of the polar regions. You cannot tell whether color is a faculty with which bodies are endowed, or an effect produced by the diffusion of light.

"You believe the whole sea to be salt without having ascertained that it is so in its deepest places.

"You recognize the existence of various substances which traverse what you call the Void: substances intangible under any known form assumed by matter, and which meet and combine with it in spite of every obstacle. That being the case, you believe in the results obtained by chemistry, though as yet it knows no method of estimating the changes produced by the currents to and fro of those substances as they pass through your crystals and your instruments on the inappreciable waves of heat or of light, conducted or repelled by the affinities of metals or vitrified flint. You obtain no substances but what are dead, out of which you have driven the unknown force which resists decomposition in all earthly things, the force of which attraction, undulation, cohesion, and polarity are manifestations.

"Life is the mind of body; bodies are but a mode of detaining it, of delaying it in its transit; if bodies were themselves living things, they would be a cause; they would not die. When a man establishes the results of the motion of which every form of creation has its share in proportion to its power of absorbing it, you call him a Learned Man, as though genius consisted in explaining what exists. Genius should lift its eyes above effects. All your learned men would laugh if you should say to them, 'There is a certain connecting relation between two beings, such as that if one of them were here and the other in Java, they might feel the same sensation at the same instant, and be aware of the fact, and question and answer each other without a mistake.' And yet there are some mineral substances which exhibit sympathies as far reaching as that of which I speak. You believe in the power of electricity when it is fixed on the lodestone, but you deny it as emanating from the soul. According to you, the moon, whose influence over the tides seems to you proven, has none over the winds, over vegetation, or over men; it can move the sea and eat into glass, but it cannot affect the sick; it has undoubted effects on one-half of the human race; none on the other half. These are your most precious convictions.

"We may go further: You believe in physics; but your physics are based, like the Catholic religion, on an act of faith. Do they not recognize an external force apart from bodies to which it imparts movement? You see its effects, but what is *it*? Where is it? What is its essence, its life? Has it any limits?—— And you deny God!

"Thus most of your scientific axioms, though true in relation to man, are false in relation to the Whole. Science is one, and you have divided it. To know the true sense of the laws of phenomena, would it not be necessary to know the correlations existing between the phenomena and the laws of the whole? There is in all things an appearance, a presentment, which strikes your sense; behind this presentment there is a soul moving—the body, and the faculty. Where are the relations which hold things together studied or taught? Nowhere. Have you, then, no absolute finality? Your best ascertained theses rest on an analysis of the forms of matter, while the spirit is constantly neglected.

"There is a supreme science of which some men—too late—get a glimpse, though they dare not own it. These men perceive the necessity for considering all bodies, not merely from the point of view of their mathematical properties, but also from that of their whole relations and occult affinities.

"The greatest of you all discerned, towards the end of his life, that all things were at the same time cause and effect reciprocally; that the visible worlds were co-ordinated to each other and captive to invisible spheres. He groaned over having tried to establish absolute principles. When counting his worlds, like grains of sand scattered throughout the ether, he explained their connection by the laws of planetary and molecular attraction. You hailed that man.—Well, and I tell you that he died in despair. Assuming that the centrifugal and centripetal forces, which he invented to account for the universe, were absolutely equal, the universe would stand still, and he insisted on motion, though in an undefined direction; but assuming the forces to be unequal, the worlds must at once fall into confusion. Thus his laws were not final;

there was another problem still higher than that of attraction, on which his spurious glory was founded. The pull of the stars against each other, and the centripetal tendency of their individual motion, did not hinder him from seeking the branch from which the whole cluster was hanging. Unhappy man; the more he extended space, the heavier was his load. He told you that every part was in equilibrium; but whither was the whole bound?

"He contemplated the space, infinite in the eyes of men, that is filled with the groups of worlds, of which a small number are registered by our telescopes, while its immensity is proved by the rapidity of light. This sublime contemplation gave him a conception of the infinitude of worlds, planted in space like flowers in a meadow, which are born like infants, grow like men, die like old men, which live by assimilating from their atmosphere the substances proper to nourish them, which have a centre and principle of life, which protect themselves from each other by an intervening space, which constitute a grand whole, that has its own life, its own destination.

"At this prospect the man trembled. He knew that life is produced by the union of the Thing with its first Principle; that death, or inertia—or gravitation—is caused by a rupture between the Thing and the motion proper to it; and he thus foresaw the crash of worlds, in ruins if God should withhold His Word. Then he set to work to seek the traces of that Word in the Apocalypse. You all thought him mad. Know this: he strove to earn forgiveness for his genius.

"Wilfrid, you came to request me to resolve equations, to fly on a rain-cloud, to plunge into the fiord and reappear as a swan. If science or miracle were the end of humanity, Moses would have left you a calculus of fluxions; Jesus Christ would have cleared up the dark places of science; His apostles would have told you whence come those immense trains of gas or of fused metals which rush revolving on a nucleus, solidifying as they seek a place in the ether, and are sometimes violently projected within range of a system where they are absorbed by a star, or crash into it by their shock, or dissolve it by the

infusion of deadly vapors. St. Paul, instead of bidding you live in God, would have explained to you that nutrition is the secret bond among all creation, and the visible bond among all living animals. In our own day, the greatest miracle would be to square the circle, a problem which you pronounce impossible, but which has no doubt been solved in the progress of worlds by the intersection of some mathematical line, whose curves are apparent to the eye of spirits elevated to the highest spheres.

"Believe me, miracles are within us and not without us. Thus have natural effects been wrought, which the nations deemed to be supernatural. Would not God have been unjust if He had vouchsafed to show His power to some generations, and had refused it to others? The Brazen Rod belongs to all. Neither Moses nor Jacob, neither Zoroaster nor Paul, nor Pythagoras nor Swedenborg, neither the most obscure evangelists nor the most amazing of God's prophets, have been superior to what you might become. Only, nations have their day of faith. If positive science were indeed the end of all human effort, how is it—confess now—that every social community, every great centre to which men gather, is invariably broken up by Providence? If civilization were the final cause of the human species, could intelligence perish? Would it perennially continue to be a purely individual possession?

"The greatness of all the nations that have ever been great has been founded on exceptions: when the exception ceased to be, the power was dead. Would not the Seers, the Prophets, the Evangelists, have laid their hand on science instead of relying on faith; would they not have hammered at your brains rather than have touched your hearts? They all came to drive the nations to God; they all proclaimed the way of life in the simple words which lead to the Heavenly Kingdom; and fired with love and faith, and inspired by the Word which hovers over the nations, compels them, vivifies them, and uplifts them, they never used it for any human end. Your great geniuses, poets, kings, and sages are swallowed up with their towns, and the desert has buried them under a shroud of sand;

while the names of these good shepherds still are blessed and survive every catastrophe.

"We can never agree on any point. Gulfs lie between us. You are on the side of darkness, I live in the true light.

"Is this the word you desired of me? I utter it with joy; it may change you. Know, then, that there are sciences of Matter and sciences of the Spirit. Where you see bodies, I see forces tending towards each other by a creative impulse. To me the character of a body is the sign-manual of its first principles and the expression of its properties. These principles give rise to certain affinities which elude you, but which are connected with centres. The different species to which life is distributed are unfailing springs which communicate with each other. Each has its specific function.

"Man is at once cause and effect; he is nourished, but he nourishes in return. When you call God the Creator, you belittle Him. He did not, as you imagine, create plants, animals, and the stars; could He act by such various means? Must He not have proceeded by unity of purpose? He emitted principles which were compelled to develop in accordance with His general laws, and subject to the conditions of their environment.

"In point of fact, all the affinities are bound together by immediate similarities; the life of worlds is attracted to centres by a greedy aspiration, just as you are all driven by hunger to seek nourishment. To give you an instance of affinities linked to similarities: the secondary law on which the creations of your mind rest—music, a celestial art—is the active evidence of this principle: is it not an assemblage of sounds harmonized by number? Is not sound a condition of the air under compression, dilatation, and repercussion? You know of what the air is composed? Azote, carbon, and oxygen. Since you can produce no sound in a vacuum, it is evident that music and the human voice are the result of organic chemical elements, acting in unison with the same substances prepared within you by your mind, and co-ordinated by means of light, the great foster-mother of this globe; for can you

have cogitated on the quantities of nitre deposited by the snows, on the discharge of thunder, on plants which derive from the air the elements they contain, and have failed to conclude that it is the sun that fuses and diffuses the subtle essence which nourishes all things here below? Swedenborg truly said, 'The earth is a man.'

"All your sciences of to-day, which make you so great in your own eyes, are a mere trifle compared with the light that floods the Seer.

"Cease, cease to question me; we speak a different language. I have used yours for once, to throw a flash of faith upon your souls, to cast a corner of my mantle over you, and tempt you away to the glorious regions of prayer. Is it God's part to stoop to you? Is it not yours rather to rise to Him? If human reason has so soon exhausted the limits of its powers merely by laying God out to prove His existence, without succeeding in doing so, is it not evident that it must seek some other way of knowing Him? That other way is in ourselves. The Seer and the believer have within themselves eyes more piercing than are those eyes which are bent on things of earth, and they discern a dawn.

"Understand this saying: Your most exact sciences, your boldest speculations, your brightest flashes of light, are but clouds. Above them all is the sanctuary whence the true Light is shed."

She sat down and was silent; and her calm features betrayed not the least sign of the trepidation which commonly disturbs an orator after his least inflamed speech.

Wilfrid whispered into the pastor's ear, leaning over him to do so:

"Who told her all this?"

"I do not know," was the reply.

"He was milder on the Falberg," Minna remarked.

Seraphita passed her hands over her eyes, and said with a smile:

"You are very pensive this evening, gentlemen. You treat me and Minna like men to whom you would talk politics or

discuss trade, while we are but girls to whom you should tell fairy-tales while drinking tea, as is the custom in our evenings in Norway.—Come, Pastor Becker, tell me some Saga which I do not know. That of Frithiof, in which you believe, and which you promised to tell me, or the story of the peasant's son who has a ship that speaks and has a soul? I dream of the frigate *Ellida*. Is it not on that fairy vessel that girls should sail the seas?"

"Since we have come down to Jarvis again," said Wilfrid, whose eyes were fixed on Seraphita as those of a robber hidden in the gloom are fixed on the spot where treasure lies, "tell me why you do not marry?"

"You are all born widowers or widows," replied she. "My marriage was decided on at my birth; I am betrothed——"

"To whom?" they all asked in a breath.

"Allow me to keep my secret," said she. "I promise, if our father will grant it, to invite you to that mysterious wedding."

"Is it to be soon?"

"I am waiting."

A long silence ensued.

"The spring is come," said Seraphita. "The noise of waters and of breaking ice has begun; will you not come to hail the first springtime of the new century?"

She rose and, followed by Wilfrid, went to a window which David had thrown open. After the long stillness of winter, the vast waters were stirring beneath the ice, and sang through the fiord like music; for there are sounds which distance glorifies, and which reach the ear in waves that seem to bring refreshment and light.

"Cease, Wilfrid," said she, "cease to cherish evil thoughts whose triumph will be a torment to endure. Who could fail to read your wishes in the sparkle of your eyes? Be good; take a step in well-doing! Is it not a step beyond the mere love of men to sacrifice yourself entirely to the happiness of the one you love? Submit to me, and I will lead you into a path where you will attain to all the greatness you dream of, and where love will be really infinite."

She left Wilfrid lost in thought.

"Can this gentle creature really be the prophetess who but now flashed lightnings from her eyes, whose words thundered about the worlds, whose hand wielded the axe of Doubt in defiance of our sciences?" said he to himself. "Have we been asleep for these few minutes?"

"Minna," said Seraphitus, returning to the pastor's daughter, "the eagles gather where the dead lie, the turtle-dove flies to the springs of living water under green and peaceful groves. The eagle soars to the skies, the dove descends from them. Venture no more into regions where you will find neither fountains nor shade. If this morning you could not look into the gulf without destruction, keep your powers for him who will love you. Go, poor child, I am betrothed, as you know."

Minna rose and went with Seraphitus to the window, where Wilfrid still was standing. They could all three hear the Sieg leaping under the force of the upper waters, which were bringing down the trees that had been frozen into the ice. The fiord had found its voice again. Illusion was over. They wondered at Nature bursting her bonds, and answering in noble harmonies to the Spirit whose call had awakened her.

When the three guests had left this mysterious being, they were filled with an indefinable feeling which was not sleep, nor torpor, nor astonishment, but a mixture of all three, which was neither twilight nor daybreak, but which made them long for light. They were all very thoughtful.

"I begin to think that she is a spirit veiled in human form," said the pastor.

Wilfrid, in his own room again, calmed and convinced, knew not how to contend with powers so divinely majestic.

Minna said to herself:

"Why will he not allow me to love him?"

V

THE FAREWELL

There is in man a phenomenon which is the despair of those reflective minds who endeavor to find some meaning in the march of social vicissitudes, and to formulate some laws of progress for the movement of intellect. However serious a fact may be, or, if supernatural facts could exist, however magnificent a miracle could be, publicly performed, the lightning flash of the fact, the thunderbolt of the miracle would be lost in the moral ocean, and the surface, rippled for an instant by some slight ebullition, would at once resume the level of its ordinary swell.

Does the Voice, to be more surely heeded, pass through an animal's jaws? Does the Hand write in strange characters on the cornice of the hall where the Court is reveling? Does the Eye light up the King's slumbers? Does the Prophet read the dream? Does Death, when summoned, stand in the luminous space where a man's faculties revive? Does the Spirit crush matter at the foot of the mystical ladder of the seven spiritual worlds hung one above another in space, and seen by the floods of light that fall in cascades down the steps of the heavenly floor? Still, however deep the inner revelation, however distinct the outward sign, by the morrow Balaam doubts both his ass and himself; Belteshazzar and Pharaoh call in seers to explain the sign—Daniel or Moses.

The Spirit descends, snatches a man above the earth, opens the seas and shows him the bottom of them, calls up vanished generations, gives life to the dry bones thickly strewn in the great valley; the Apostle writes the *Apocalypse;* and twenty centuries later human science confirms the Apostle and translates his figures of speech into axioms. What difference does it make? The mass of people live to-day as they lived yesterday, as they lived in the first Olympiad, as they lived the first day after creation, and on the eve of the great cataclysm.

Doubt drowns everything in its waters. The same waves beat, with the self-same ebb and flow, on the human granite that hems in the sea of intellect.

Man asks himself whether indeed he saw what he saw, whether he really heard the words that were spoken, whether the fact was a fact, and the idea really an idea; and then he goes on his way, he thinks of his business, he obeys the inevitable servitor of Death—Forgetfulness, who throws his black cloak over the old humanity of which the younger has no remembrance. Man never ceases to move, to go on, to grow as a vegetable grows, till the day when the axe falls. If this flood-like force, this mounting pressure of bitter waters, hinders all progress, it also, no doubt, is a warning of death. None but the loftier spirits open to faith can discern Jacob's mystical stair.

After listening to the reply in which Seraphita, being so urgently questioned, had unrolled the divine scroll, as an organ fills a church with its roar, and shows the power of the musical universe by flooding the most inaccessible vaults with its solemn notes, playing, like light, among the frail wreaths of the capitals, Wilfrid went home, appalled at having seen the world in ruins, and, above the ruins, a light unknown, shed by the hand of that young creature.

On the following day he was still thinking of it, but his terrors were allayed; he was not in ruins, nor even changed—his passions and ideas woke up fresh and vigorous.

He went to breakfast with the Minister, and found him lost in the study of Jean Wier's treatise, which he had been looking through that morning to be able to reassure his visitor. With the childlike simplicity of a sage, the pastor had turned down the leaves at some pages where Jean Wier adduced authentic evidence demonstrating the possibility of such things as had happened the day before; for to the learned an idea is an event, whereas the greatest events are to them hardly an idea.

By the time these two philosophers had swallowed their fifth cup of tea, that mystical evening seemed quite natural.

The heavenly truths were more or less substantial arguments, and open to discussion. Seraphita was a more or less eloquent girl; allowance must be made for her exquisite voice, her enchanting beauty, her fascinating manner, all the oratorical skill by which an actor can put a world of feelings and ideas into a sentence which in itself is often quite commonplace.

"Pooh!" said the good minister, with a little philosophical grimace, as he spread a slice of bread with salt butter, "the answer to all these riddles is six feet beneath the mould!"

"At the same time," said Wilfrid, sugaring his tea, "I cannot understand how a girl of sixteen can know so many things; for she squeezed everything into her speech as if it were in a vise."

"But only read the story of the Italian girl who, at twelve years old, could speak forty-two languages, ancient and modern," said the pastor. "And again, that of the monk who read thought by smell. These are in Jean Wier, and in a dozen other treatises which I will give you to read, a thousand proofs rather than one."

"I daresay, my dear Pastor: but Seraphita remains to me a wife it would be divine joy to possess."

"She is all intellect," replied the minister dubiously.

Some days passed by, during which the snow in the valleys insensibly melted away; the greenery of the forests peeped through like a fresh growth; Norwegian nature made itself beautiful in anticipation of its brief bridal day. All this time, though the milder temperature allowed of open-air exercise, Seraphita remained in solitary seclusion. Thus Wilfrid's passion was enhanced by the aggravating vicinity of the girl he loved, and who refused to be seen. When the inscrutable being admitted Minna, Minna could detect the symptoms of an inward fever; Seraphita's voice was hollow, and her complexion was wan; whereas hitherto its transparency might have been compared by a poet to that of the diamond, it now had the sheen of the topaz.

"Have you seen her?" asked Wilfrid, who had prowled round the house, awaiting Minna's return.

"We shall lose him!" said the girl, her eyes filling with tears.

"Do not try to fool me!" cried the stranger, controlling the vehemence of tone that expressed his fury. "You can only love Seraphita as one girl loves another, not with such love as I feel for her. You cannot conceive what peril you would be in if there were anything to alarm my jealousy.—Why can I not go to see her? Is it you who raise difficulties?"

"I cannot think," said Minna, calm on the surface, but quaking with mortal terror, "what right you have to sound the depths of my heart.—Yes, I love him," she went on, summoning the courage of conviction to confess the faith of her soul. "But my jealousy, though natural to love, fears nobody here. Alas! What I am jealous of is some unconfessed feeling in which he is absorbed. Between him and me lies a space I can never abridge. I want to know whether the stars love him more than I, whether they or I would be the more eagerly devoted to his happiness? Why, why, should I not be free to declare my affection? In the presence of death we may all confess our attachment—and Seraphitus is dying."

"Minna, indeed you are under a mistake; the siren round whom my desires have so often hovered, who allows me to admire her as she reclines on her couch, so graceful, fragile, and suffering, is not a man."

"Nay," replied Minna, in some agitation, "he whose powerful hand guided me over the Falberg to the sœter under the shelter of the Ice-cap up there"—and she pointed to the peak —"is certainly not a mere, weak girl. If you had but heard her prophesy! Her poetry is the music of thought. No young girl could have had the solemn depth of voice which stirred my soul."

"What certainty have you——?" Wilfrid began.

"None but that of my heart!" replied Minna in confusion, and hastily interrupting the speaker.

"Well, but I," cried Wilfrid, with a terrible glance of murderous eagerness and desire, "I, who know what the extent of her power is over me—I will prove your mistake."

At this moment, when words were rushing to Wilfrid's tongue as vehemently as ideas in his head, he saw Seraphita come out of the Swedish Castle, followed by David. The sight of her soothed his effervescent state.

"Look," said he; "none but a woman can have that grace and languor."

"He is ill; it is his last walk!" said Minna.

At a sign from his mistress, David left her, and she advanced towards Wilfrid and Minna.

"Let us go to the falls of the Sieg," said the mysterious being; it was the wish of a sufferer which all hasten to accede to.

A thin, white haze hung over the heights and dales of the fiord, and the peaks, glittering like stars, pierced above it, giving it the effect of a milky way moving onwards. Through this earth-born vapor the sun was visible as a globe of red-hot iron. In spite of these last freaks of winter, gusts of mild air, bringing the scent of the birch-trees, already covered with their yellow flowers, and the rich perfume exhaled by the larches, whose silky tufts were all displayed—breezes warm with the incense and the breathing of the earth testified to the exquisite springtime of Northern lands, the brief rapture of a most melancholy nature.

The wind was beginning to roll away the veil of mist that hardly hid the view of the gulf. The birds were singing.

Where the sun had not dried off the frost that trickled down the road in murmuring rills, the bark of the trees was pleasing to the eye by its fantastic appearance.

They all three went along the strand in silence. Wilfrid and Minna were lost in contemplation of the magical scene after their long endurance of the monotonous winter landscape. Their companion was pensive, and walked as though trying to distinguish one voice in the concert. They reached the rocks between which the Sieg tumbles, at the end of the long avenue of ancient fir-trees which the torrent had cut in meandering through the forest, a path covered in by a groined arch of boughs, meeting like those of a cathedral. From

thence the whole of the fiord was seen, and the sea sparkled on the horizon like a steel blade. At this instant the clouds vanished, showing the blue sky. Down in the hollows and round the trees the air was full of floating sparkles, the diamond dust swept up by a light breeze, and dazzling gems of drops were hanging at the tip of the branches of each pyramid. The torrent was rolling below; a smoke came up from the surface, tinted in the sunshine with every hue of light; its beams, decomposed, displayed perfect rainbows of the seven colors, like the play of a thousand prisms meeting and crossing there. This wild shore was curtained with various kinds of lichen, a rich web, sheeny with moisture, like some gorgeous hanging of silk. Heath, already in blossom, crowned the rocks with flowers in skilful disorder. All this stirring foliage, tempted by the living waters, hung their heads over it like hair; the larches waved their lace-like arms, as if caressing the pines, that stood rigid like careworn old men.

This luxuriant display was a contrast to the solemnity of the antique colonnades of the forests, range upon range on the hillside, and to the broad sheet of the fiord, in which the torrent drowned its fury at the feet of the three spectators. Beyond it all, the open sea closed in this picture, traced by the greatest of poets—Chance—to which we owe the medley beauty of creation when left, as it would seem, to itself. Jarvis was a speck almost lost in this landscape, in this immensity—sublime, as everything is, which, having but a brief existence, offers a transient image of perfection; for by a law, fatal only to our sight, creations that appear perfect, the delight of our heart and of our eyes, have but one spring to live here.

At the top of that cliff these three beings might easily fancy themselves alone in all the world.

"How exquisite!" exclaimed Wilfrid.

"Nature sings its hymns," said Seraphita. "Is not this music delicious? Confess now, Wilfrid, no woman you ever knew could create for herself so magnificent a retreat. Here I experience a feeling that the sight of great cities rarely

inspires, and which makes me long to remain here, lying among these grasses of such rapid growth. Then, with my eyes on the sky, my heart laid bare, lost in the sense of immensity, I could let myself listen to the sighs of the flower, which, scarcely released from its primitive nature, would fain run about; and to the cries of the eider, aggrieved at having only wings, while I thought of the cravings of man, who has something of everything, and who also is for ever full of desires!—But this, Wilfrid, is a woman's poetic fancy! You can find a voluptuous thought in that hazy expanse of water; in those fantastic veils, behind which nature plays like some coquettish bride; and in this atmosphere, where she perfumes her green hair for her bridal. You would fain see the form of a naiad in that wreath of mist, and I, as you think, ought to hear a manly voice in the torrent."

"And is not love in it all, like a bee in a flower?" replied Wilfrid, who, seeing in her for the first time some trace of earthly feeling, thought it a favorable moment for the expression of his fervent affection.

"Always the same?" said Seraphita, laughing. Minna having left them; the girl was climbing a crag where she had seen some blue saxifrages.

"Always!" exclaimed Wilfrid. "Listen," he said, with an imperious glance that met a panoply of adamant, "you know not who I am, nor what my power is, nor what I demand. Do not reject my last entreaty. Be mine, for the sake of the world within your heart! Be mine, that my conscience may be pure, that a heavenly voice may sound in my ears and inspire me aright in the undertaking I have vowed to carry out, impelled by my hatred of the nations, but to be achieved for their welfare if only you are with me. What nobler mission may a woman dream of?—I came to these lands meditating a great scheme."

"And you are prepared to sacrifice it and its glories," said she, "to a very simple girl, whom you will love, and who will guide you into a peaceful path?"

"What do I care? I only want you! This is my secret,"

he replied, going on with his speech. "I have traveled all over the North, the great workshop where the new races are produced who overspread the earth like floods of humanity sent forth to renew worn-out civilization. I wanted to have begun my work on one of these points, conquering there the ascendency that force and intellect can assert over a small race; to have trained it to battle, to have declared war, and have sent it raging like a conflagration to consume Europe, while shouting to these 'Liberty!' to those 'Plunder!' to some 'Glory!' to others 'Pleasure!' I, standing meanwhile like the image of Fate, pitiless and cruel, moving like the storm which assimilates from the atmosphere the atoms of which the lightning is compounded, and feeding on men like a rapacious monster. I should then have conquered Europe; she is now at a period when she looks for the coming of the new Messiah, who is to devastate the world and to reform the nations. Europe can believe in no one but Him who will trample her under foot.

"Some day historians and poets would have justified my existence, have magnified me, have ascribed great ideas to me—to me, to whom this huge pleasantry, written in blood, is but revenge.

"But, dear Seraphita, what I have seen has disgusted me with the North; force here is too blind, and I crave for the Indies. A duel with a selfish, cowardly, and mercenary government fascinates me more. Besides, it is easier to arouse the imagination of the races that dwell at the foot of Caucasus than to convince the minds of men in these frozen lands. I am tempted to cross the Russian steppes, to reach the frontiers of Asia, to cover it as far as the Ganges with my victorious flood of human beings, and then I shall overthrow the English rule. Seven men, at different periods, have already carried out such a scheme. I shall renew Art, as the Saracens did when Mahomet cast them over Europe. I will not be so sordid a king as those who now govern the ancient provinces of the Roman Empire, quarreling with their subjects over custom-house dues. No, nothing shall arrest the flash of my

gaze or the storm of my speech! My feet, like those of Genghis Khan, shall cover a third of the globe; my hand shall grasp Asia as did that of Aurung Zeeb.

"Be my partner; take your seat, fair and lovely being, on a throne. I have never doubted my success, but with you to dwell in my heart, I should be certain of it."

"I have reigned already," said Seraphita.

The words were like the blow dealt by the axe of a skilful woodsman at the root of a sapling, felling it at once. Men alone can know what a storm a woman can rouse in a man's soul when he has been trying to impress her with his strength or his power, his intellect or his superiority, and the capricious fair nods her head and says, "Oh, that is nothing!" or, with a bored smile, observes, "I know all that," when power is as nought to her.

"What!" cried Wilfrid in despair, "the riches of Art, the wealth of the world, the splendor of a court——"

She checked him by a mere curl of her lips, and said:

"Beings more powerful than you are have offered me more."

"Well, have you no soul, then, that you are not fascinated by the prospect of consoling a great man who will sacrifice everything to dwell with you in a little home by the side of a lake?"

"Why," said she, "I am loved with a boundless love."

"By whom?" cried Wilfrid, going towards Seraphita with a frenzied gesture, as if to fling her into the foaming falls of the Sieg.

She looked at him; his arm dropped; and she pointed to Minna, who came running down, all rose and white, and as pretty as the flowers she carried in her hand.

"My child!" said Seraphitus, going forward to meet her.

Wilfrid stood on the edge of the cliff as motionless as a statue, lost in thought, longing to cast himself into the flow of the torrent, like one of the fallen trees that passed under his eyes and vanished in the abyss beneath.

"I gathered them for you," said Minna, giving the nose-

gay to the being she adored. "One of them—this one," said she, picking out a particular blossom, "is like the flower we gathered on the Falberg."

Seraphitus looked at the blossom and then at Minna.

"Why do you question me thus? Do you doubt me?"

"No," said the girl, "my confidence in you is unbounded. While you are far more beautiful to me than this beautiful scenery, you also seem to me to be superior in intelligence to all the rest of humanity. When I have been with you, I seem to have communed with God. I only wish——"

"What?" asked Seraphitus, with a flashing look that revealed to the girl the vast distance that divided them.

"I wish I could suffer in your stead."

"This is the most dangerous of Thy creatures," thought Seraphitus. "Is it a criminal thought, O God, to long to present her to Thee?—Have you forgotten," he said aloud, "all I told you up there?" and he pointed upwards to the peak of the Ice-cap.

"Now he is terrible again!" thought Minna with a shudder.

The roar of the Sieg formed an accompaniment to the thoughts of these three beings, who stood together for a few minutes on a projecting slab of rock, parted, as they were, by immeasurable gulfs in the spiritual world.

"Teach me then, Seraphitus," said Minna, in a voice as silvery as a pearl and as gentle as the movements of a sensitive plant. "Teach me what I must do to avoid loving you? Who could fail to admire you? And love is the admiration that is never tired."

"Poor child!" said Seraphitus, turning pale, "only one Being can be loved thus."

"Who is that?" asked Minna.

"You shall know!" was the reply in the weak voice of one who lies down to die.

"Help! He is dying!" cried Minna.

Wilfrid hastened forward, and seeing this being reclining gracefully on a block of gneiss over which time had thrown its carpet of velvet, its glistening lichens, and dusky mosses, lustrous in the sunshine,—

"She is lovely!" he exclaimed.

"This is the last glance I may give to nature in travail," said Seraphita, collecting all her strength to rise. She went to the edge of the cliff, whence she could see the whole of the sublime landscape, but lately wrapped in its mantle of snow, now full of life, green and flowery.

"Farewell," said she, "oh, burning hotbed of love! whence everything tends from the centre to the utmost circumference, while the extremities are gathered up, like a woman's hair, to be spun into the unknown plait by which thou art linked, in the invisible ether, to the Divine Idea!

"Behold him who is bending over the furrow, watered with his sweat, and pausing for an instant to look up to heaven; behold her who gathers the children in to feed them from her breast; him who knots the ropes in the fury of the tempest; her who sits in the niche of a rock awaiting her father; and, again, all those who hold out their hands for help after spending their life in thankless toil? Peace and courage to them all, and to all farewell!

"Do you hear the cry of the soldier who dies unknown, the wrath of the man who laments, disappointed, in the desert? Peace and courage to all, to all farewell! Farewell, you who die for the kings of the earth; but farewell, too, ye races without a native land, and farewell, lands without a people—seeking each other. Farewell, above all, to thee, sublime exile, who knowest not where to lay thy head! Farewell, dear innocence, dragged away by the hair of your head for having loved too well! Farewell, mothers sitting by your dying sons! Farewell, holy, broken-hearted wives! Farewell, O ye who are poor, young, weak, and suffering, whose woes I have so often made my own! Farewell, all ye who gravitate in the sphere of instinct, suffering there for others!

"Farewell, ye discoverers who seek the East through the thick darkness of abstractions as grand as first principles; and ye martyrs of thought, led by thought to the true light! Farewell, realms of inquiry, where I can hear the moans of insulted genius, the sigh of the sage to whom light comes—too late!

"I perceive the angelic harmonies, the wafted fragrance, the incense from the heart exhaled by those who move on, praying, comforting, diffusing divine light and heavenly balm to sorrowing souls. Courage, Choir of Love! to whom the nations cry, 'Comfort us! Protect us!' Courage, and farewell!

"Farewell, rock of granite, thou shalt become a flower; farewell, flower, thou shalt be a dove; farewell, dove, thou shalt be a woman; farewell, woman, thou shalt be Suffering; farewell, man, thou shalt be Belief; farewell, you, who shall be all love and prayer!"

Exhausted by fatigue, this inexplicable being for the first time leaned on Wilfrid and Minna to support her back to her house. Wilfrid and Minna felt some mysterious contagion from her touch. They had gone but a few steps when they met David in tears.

"She is going to die; why have you brought her here?" he exclaimed from afar.

Seraphita was lifted up by the old man, who had recovered the strength of youth, and he flew with her to the door of the Swedish castle, like an eagle carrying some white lamb to his eyrie.

VI

THE ROAD TO HEAVEN

On the day after Seraphita had had this foretaste of her end, and had bidden farewell to the earth, as a prisoner looks at his cell before quitting it for ever, she was suffering such pain as compelled her to remain in the absolute quietude of those who endure extreme anguish. Wilfrid and Minna went to see her, and found her lying on her couch of furs. Her soul, still shrouded in the flesh, shone through the veil, bleaching it, as it were, from day to day. The progress made by the spirit in undermining the last barrier which divided

it from the infinite was called sickness; the hour of life was named death. David wept to see his mistress suffering, and refused to listen to her consolations; the old man was as unreasonable as a child. The pastor was urgent on Seraphita to take some remedies; but all was in vain.

One morning she asked for the two she had been so fond of, telling them that this was the last of her bad days. Wilfrid and Minna came in great alarm; they knew that they were about to lose her. Seraphita smiled at them, as those smile who are departing to a better world; her head drooped like a flower overweighted with dew, which opens its cup for the last time and exhales its last fragrance to the air. She looked at them with sadness, of which they were the cause; she had ceased to think of herself, and they felt this without being able to express their grief, mingled as it was with gratitude.

Wilfrid remained standing, silent and motionless, lost in such contemplation as is suggested by things so vast that they make us understand, here on earth, the Supreme Immensity. Minna, emboldened by the weakness of this powerful being, or perhaps by her dread of losing her beloved for ever, bent down and murmured, "Seraphitus—let me follow you!"

"Can I hinder you?"

"But why do you not love me enough to remain here?"

"I could not love anything here."

"What, then, do you love?"

"Heaven."

"Are you worthy of heaven if you thus despise God's creatures here?"

"Minna, can we love two beings at the same time? Is the Best-beloved really the Best-beloved if He does not fill the whole heart? Ought He not to be the first and last and only One? Does not she who is all love quit the world for her Beloved? Her whole family becomes but a memory; she has but one relation—it is He! Her soul is no longer her own, but His! If she keeps anything within her that

is not His, she does not love; no, she does not love! Is loving half-heartedly loving at all? The voice of the Beloved makes her all glad and flows through her veins like a purple tide, redder than the blood; His look is a light that flashes through her, she is fused with Him; where He is all is beautiful. He is warmth to her soul, He lights everything; near Him, is it ever cold or dark to her? He is never absent; He is always within us, we think in Him, with Him, for Him. That, Minna, is how I love Him."

"Whom?" said Minna, gripped by consuming jealousy.

"God!" replied Seraphitus, whose voice flashed upon their souls like a beacon light of freedom blazing from hill to hill —"God, who never betrays us! God, who does not desert us, but constantly fulfils our desires, and who alone can perennially satisfy His creatures with infinite and unmixed joys! God, who is never weary, and who only has smiles! God, ever new, who pours His treasures into the soul, who purifies it without bitterness, who is all harmony, all flame! God, who enters into us to blossom there, who fulfils all our aspirations, who never calls us to account if we are His, but gives Himself wholly, ravishes us, and expands and multiplies us in Himself—God, in short!

"Minna, I love you because you may be His! I love you because if you come to Him you will be mine."

"Then lead me to Him," said she, kneeling down. "Take me by the hand; I will leave you no more."

"Lead us, Seraphita," cried Wilfrid vehemently, coming forward to kneel with Minna. "Yes, you have made me thirst for the Light and thirst for the Word; I thirst with the love you have implanted in my heart, I will cherish your soul in mine; impart your Will, and I will do whatsoever you bid me do. If I may not win you, I will treasure every feeling that you can infuse into me as part of you! If I cannot be united to you but by my strength alone, I will cling as flame clings to what it consumes.—Speak!"

"Angel!" cried the incomprehensible being, with a look that seemed to enfold them in an azure mantle. "Angel! heaven is thine inheritance!"

And a great silence fell after this cry, which rang in the souls of Wilfrid and Minna like the first chord of some celestial symphony.

"If you desire to train your feet to walk in the way that leads to heaven, remember that the first steps are rough," said the suffering soul. "God must be sought for His own sake. In that sense He is a jealous God, He will have you altogether His; but when you have given yourself to Him, He never abandons you. I will leave you the keys of the kingdom where His light shines, where you will everywhere be in the bosom of the Father, in the heart of the Bridegroom. No sentinel guards the gates; you can enter from any side; His palace, His treasures, His sceptre, nothing is forbidden; He says to all, 'Take them freely!' But you must *will* to go thither. You must start as for a journey, leave your home, give up your plans, bid farewell to your friends—father, mother, sister, even the infant brother that cries—an eternal farewell, for you will never return, any more than martyrs bound for the stake returned to their homes; you must, in short, strip yourself of the feelings and possessions to which men cling; otherwise, you will not be wholly given up to your enterprise.

"Do for God what you would have done for your ambitious schemes, what you do when you take up an art, what you did when you loved a creature more than Him, or when you were studying some secret of human knowledge. Is not God Knowledge itself, Love itself, the Fount of all poetry? Is not His treasure a thing to covet? His treasure is inexhaustible, His poetry is infinite, His love unchangeable, His knowledge infallible and full of mysteries. Cling to nothing, then; He will give you All! Yes, in His heart you will find possessions beyond all compare with those you leave on earth.

"What I tell you is the truth. You will have His power, you will be allowed to use it as you use anything that belongs to your lover or your mistress.

"Alas! most men doubt, lack faith, will, and perseverance.

Though some set out on the road, they presently look back and return. Few are they who know how to choose between these two extremes—to go or to stay; heaven or the muck-heap. All hesitate. Weakness leads to wandering, passion to evil ways, vice as a habit clogs the feet, and man makes no progress towards a better state.

"Every being passes a preliminary life in the Sphere of Instinct, laboring with endless toil to amass earthly treasures, only to recognize their futility at last. But how many times must we live through this first life before quitting it fit to begin another stage of trial in the Sphere of Abstractions, where the mind is exercised in false science, and the spirit is at last weary of human speech—for, matter being exhausted, the spirit prevails? How many forms must the being elect to heaven wear out, before he has learned the preciousness of silence, and of the solitude whose star-strewn steppes are the floor of the spiritual world? It is after testing and trying the void that his eyes turn to the right path. Then there are other existences to be worn through or ever he may reach the road where the Light shines.

"Death marks a stage on this journey. After that, his experience is in a reversed order; it takes a whole life, perhaps, to acquire the virtues that are the antithesis of the errors in which he has previously lived.

"Thus, first we live the life of suffering, where torments make us thirst for love. Next comes the life of loving, where devotion to the creature teaches us devotion to the Creator; where the virtues of love, its thousand sacrifices, its angelic hope, its joys paid for by grief, its patience and resignation, excite an appetite for things divine. After this comes the life during which we seek, in silence, the traces of the Word, and become humble and charitable. Then the life of high desire; finally, the life of prayer. There we find eternal sunshine; there are flowers, there is fruition!

"The qualities we acquire, and which slowly grow up in us, are the invisible bonds binding each of these existences to the next; the soul alone remembers them, since matter has

no memory for spiritual things. The mind alone preserves a tradition of former states. This unbroken legacy of the past to the present, and of the present to the future, is the secret of human genius: some have the gift of form, some the gift of number, some the gift of harmony; these are all steps in the way to the Light. Yes, whoever possesses one of these gifts, touches the infinite at one spot.

"The Word, of which I have here uttered a few axioms, has been distributed over the earth, which has reduced it to powder, and infused it into its works, its doctrines, its poetry. If the tiniest speck of it shines on a work, you say, 'This is great; this is true; this is sublime!' And that mere atom vibrates within you, giving you a foretaste of heaven. Thus, one has sickness, to divide him from the world; another has solitude, bringing him near to God; a third poetry; in short, everything that throws you in on yourself, striking you and crushing you, is a ringing call from the Divine Sphere.

"When a being has traced the first furrow straight, it is enough to make the others by; one single profound thought, a voice once heard, an acute pang, a single echo that finds the Word in you, changes your soul for ever. Every road leads to God; hence you have many chances of finding Him if you walk straight on. When the happy day dawns that finds you with your foot on the road, starting on your pilgrimage, the earth knows no more of you, it understands you no more, you are no longer in harmony with it, it rejects you.

"Those who come to know these things, and who speak a few utterances of the true Word, find not where to lay their head; they are hunted like wild beasts, and often perish on the scaffold amid the rejoicing of the assembled populace; but angels open the gates of heaven to them. So your destination is a secret between you and God, as love is a secret between two hearts. You are as the hidden treasure over which men trample, greedy for gold, but not knowing that it is there.

"Your life is one of incessant activity. Each act has a

purpose that tends to God, just as when you love, your acts and thoughts are full of the creature you love; but love and its joys, love and its sensual pleasures, is but an imperfect image of the infinite love that unites you to the Celestial Bridegroom. Every earthly joy is succeeded by anguish and dissatisfaction; for love to bring no disgust in its train, death must quench it at the fiercest, or ever you see the ashes; but God transforms our miseries into raptures, joy is multiplied by itself, it constantly increases, and knows no bounds.

"Thus, in the earthly life a transient love is ended by enduring tribulations; whereas, in the spiritual life, the tribulations of a day end in infinite joys. Your soul is for ever glad. You feel God close to you, in you; He gives a flavor of holiness to all things, He shines in your soul, He seals you with His sweetness, He weans you from the earth for your own sake, and makes you care for it for His sake by suffering you to use His power. You do, in His name, the works He inspires you to do; you wipe away tears; you act for Him; you have nothing of your own; like Him, you love all creatures with inextinguishable love; you long to see them all marching towards Him, as a truly loving woman would fain see all the nations of the earth obedient to her Beloved.

"The last life—that in which all previous lives are summed up—is the life of prayer; in it every power is strung to the highest pitch, and its merits will open the gates of heaven to the being made perfect. Who can make you understand the greatness, the majesty, the power of prayer? Oh that my voice may be as thunder in your hearts, and that it may change them! Be now, forthwith, what you will become after trials. There are certain privileged beings—prophets, seers, evangelists, martyrs, all who suffer for the Word or who have declared it—these souls cross the human spheres at a single bound, and rise at once to prayer. So, too, do those who are consumed by the flame of faith. Be ye then such a daring pair! God accepts such temerity; He loves those who take Him with violence, He never rejects such as can

force their way to Him. Understand this: Desire, the torrent of will, is so potent in a man, that a single jet forcibly emitted is enough to win anything, a single cry is often enough when uttered under the stress of faith. Be ye one of those beings, full of force, will, and love! Be victorious over the earth! Let the hunger and thirst for God possess you wholly; run to Him as the thirsting hart runs to the water-brook. Desire will give you wings; tears, the flowers of repentance, will fall like a heavenly baptism, whence your nature will come forth purified. From the bosom of these waters leap into prayer!

"Silence and meditation are efficacious means of entering on this road; God always reveals Himself to the solitary and contemplative man. By this method the necessary separation is effected between matter, which has so long held you shrouded in darkness, and the spirit, which is born in you and gives you light, and day will dawn in your soul. Your broken heart receives the light which floods it; you no longer feel convictions, but dazzling certainties. The poet has expression, the sage meditates, the righteous man acts; but he who is on the frontier of the divine worlds prays, and his prayer is expression, meditation, and action all in one! Yes, his prayer contains everything, includes everything; it completes your nature by showing you the Spirit and the Way.

"Prayer is the fair and radiant daughter of all the human virtues, the arch connecting heaven and earth, the sweet companion that is alike the lion and the dove; and prayer will give you the key of heaven. As pure and as bold as innocence, as strong as all things are that are entire and single, this fair and invincible queen rests on the material world; she has taken possession of it; for, like the sun, she casts about it a sphere of light. The universe belongs to him who will, who can, who knows how to pray; but he must will, he must be able, and he must know how—in one word, he must have power, faith, and wisdom. And, indeed, when prayer is the outcome of so many trials, it is the consummation of all truth, of all power, of all emotion. The offspring of the

laborious, slow, and persistent development of every natural property, and alive by the divine insufflation of the Word, she has enchantments in her hand, she is the crown of worship—neither material worship, which has its symbols, nor spiritual worship, which has its formulas, but worship of the divine order.

"We do not then say prayers; prayer lights up within us, and is a faculty which acts of itself: it acquires the vital activity which lifts it above all forms; it links the soul to God, and you are joined to Him as the root of a tree is joined to the earth; the elements of things flow in your veins, and you live the life of the worlds themselves. Prayer bestows external conviction by enabling you to penetrate the world of matter through a cohesion of all your faculties with elementary substances; it bestows internal conviction by evolving your very essence, and mingling it with that of the spiritual spheres.

"To pray thus you must attain to absolute freedom from the flesh; you must be refined in the furnace to the purity of a diamond; for that perfect communion can only be achieved by absolute quiescence, the stilling of every storm. Yes, prayer, literally an aspiration of the soul set wholly free from the body, bears up every power, applying them all to the constant and persistent union of the visible and the invisible. When you possess the gift of praying without weariness, with love, assurance, force, and intelligence, your spiritualized nature soon attains to power. It passes beyond everything, like the whirlwind or the thunder, and partakes of the nature of God. You acquire alacrity of spirit; in one instant you can be present in every region; you are borne, like the Word itself, from one end of the world to the other There is a harmony—you join in it; there is a light—you see it; there is a melody—its counterpart is in you. In that frame you will feel your intellect expanding, growing, and its insight reaching to prodigious distances; in fact, to the spirit, time and space are not. Distance and duration are proportions proper to matter; and spirit and matter have nothing in common.

"Although these things proceed in silence and stillness, without disturbance or external emotion, everything is action in prayer; but vital action, devoid of all substantiality, refined like the motion of worlds into a pure and invisible force. It comes down from above like light, and gives life to the souls that lie in its rays, as nature lies in those of the sun. It everywhere resuscitates virtue, purifies and sanctifies action, peoples the solitude, and gives a foretaste of eternal bliss. When once you have known the ecstasy of the divine transport that comes of your internal struggles, there is no more to be said; when once you have grasped the sistrum on which to praise God, you will never lay it down. Hence the isolation in which angelic spirits dwell and their scorn of all that constitutes human joys.

"I say unto you, they are cut off from the number of those who must die; if they understand their speech, they no longer understand their ideas; they are amazed by their doings, by what is termed politics, by earthly laws and communities; to them there are no mysteries, nothing but truth. Those who have attained the degree at which their eyes can discern the gates of heaven, and who, without casting a single glance behind, without expressing a single regret, can look down upon the worlds and read their destinies,—those, I say, are silent, and wait and endure the last conflict; the last is the hardest, resignation is the supreme virtue. To dwell in exile and make no complaint, to have no care for things on earth and yet to smile, to belong to God and be left among men!

"Do you not plainly hear the voice that cries to you, 'On! on!' Often in a celestial vision the angels descend and wrap you in song. Then you must see them soar back to the hive without a tear, without a murmur. To murmur would be to fail. Resignation is the fruit that ripens at the gate of heaven. How impressive and beautiful are the calm smile, the unruffled brow of the resigned creature! How radiant the light that adorns his face! Those who come within his range grow better; his look is penetrating and pathetic. He triumphs merely by his presence, more eloquent in his silence

than the prophet in his speech. He stands alert like a faithful dog listening for his master.

"Stronger than love, more eager than hope, greater than faith, Resignation is the adorable maiden who, prone on the earth, clings for an instant to the palm she has won by leaving the print of her pure white feet; and when she is no more, men come in crowds and say, 'Behold!' God preserves her there as an image, and at her feet creep all the shapes and species of animal life seeking their way. Now and again she shakes and sheds the light that emanates from her hair, and we see; she speaks, and we listen; and all say to one another, 'A miracle!'

"Often she triumphs in the name of God; men in their terror deny her and put her to death; she lays down her sword and smiles at the stake after saving the nations!

"How many pardoned angels have stepped from martyrdom to heaven! Sinai and Golgotha are not here nor there. The angel is crucified everywhere, and in every sphere. Sighs go up to God from every world. The earth on which we live is one ear of the harvest; humanity is but a species in the vast field where flowers are grown for heaven.

"In short, God is everywhere the same, and it is easy everywhere to go to Him by prayer."

After these words, falling as from the lips of a second Hagar in the desert, and stirring the souls they pierced like the spears shot by the fiery word of Isaiah, the Being was silent to collect some little remaining strength. Neither Wilfrid nor Minna dared to speak. Then on a sudden HE sat up to die.

"Soul of the universe, oh God, whom I love for Thyself! Thou, Judge and Father, gauge a fervor that knows no limit but Thine infinite goodness! Impart to me Thine essence and Thy faculties, that I may be more truly Thine! Take me, that I may no longer be my own. If I am not duly purified, cast me back into the furnace. If I am not finely moulded, let me be made into some useful ploughshare or victorious sword. Grant me some glorious martyrdom to

proclaim Thy word. Even if Thou reject me, I will bless Thy justice. If my exceeding love may win in a moment what hard and patient labor may not obtain, snatch me up in Thy chariot of fire! Whether Thou shalt grant me to triumph or to suffer again, blessed be Thou! But if I suffer for Thee, is not that a triumph! Take me—seize, snatch, drag me away! Or, if Thou wilt, reject me! Thou art He whom I worship, and who can do no wrong.—Ah!" he cried after a pause, "the bonds are breaking. Pure spirits, holy throng, come forth from the depths, fly over the surface of the luminous flood! The hour has struck, come, gather round me. We will sing at the gates of the sanctuary, our chants shall disperse the last lingering clouds. We will unite to hail the morn of everlasting day. Behold the dawn of the true Light! Why cannot I take my friends with me?—Farewell, poor earth, farewell!"

VII

THE ASSUMPTION

This last hymn was not uttered in words, nor expressed by gestures, nor by any of the signs which serve men as a means of communicating their thoughts, but as the soul speaks to itself; for, at the moment when Seraphita was revealed in her true nature, her ideas were no longer enslaved to human language. The vehemence of her last prayer had broken the bonds. Like a white dove, the soul hovered for a moment above this body, of which the exhausted materials were about to dissever.

The aspiration of this soul to heaven was so infectious, that Wilfrid and Minna failed to discern death as they saw the radiant spark of life.

They had fallen on their knees when Seraphitus had turned to the dawn, and they were inspired by his ecstasy.

The fear of the Lord, who creates man anew and purges him of his dross, consumed their hearts. Their eyes were closed to the things of the earth, and opened to the glories of heaven.

Though surprised by the trembling before God which overcame some of those seers known to men as prophets, they still trembled, like them, when they found themselves within the circle where the glory of the Spirit was shining.

Then the veil of the flesh, which had hitherto hidden him from them, insensibly faded away, revealing the divine substance. They were left in the twilight of the dawn, whose pale light prepared them to see the true light, and to hear the living word without dying of it.

In this condition they both began to understand the immeasurable distances that divide the things of earth from the things of heaven.

The life on whose brink they stood, trembling and dazzled in a close embrace, as two children take refuge side by side to gaze at a conflagration—that Life gave no hold to the senses. The Spirit was above them; it shed fragrance without odor, and melody without the help of sound; here, where they knelt, there were neither surfaces, nor angles, nor atmosphere. They dared no longer question him nor gaze on him, but remained under his shadow, as under the burning rays of the tropical sun we dare not raise our eyes for fear of being blinded.

They felt themselves near to him, though they could not tell by what means they thus found themselves, as in a dream, on the border line of the visible and the invisible, nor how they had ceased to see the visible and perceived the invisible.

They said to themselves, "If he should touch us, we shall die!" But the Spirit was in the infinite, and they did not know that in the infinite time and space are not, that they were divided from him by gulfs, though apparently so near. Their souls not being prepared to receive a complete knowledge of the faculties of that life, they only perceived it darkly, apprehending it according to their weakness.

Otherwise, when the Living Word rang forth, of which the distant sound fell on their ear, its meaning entering into their soul as life enters into a body, a single tone of that Word would have swept them away, as a whirl of fire seizes a straw.

Thus they beheld only what their nature, upheld by the power of the Spirit, allowed them to see; they heard only so much as they were able to hear.

Still, in spite of these mitigations, they shuddered as they heard the voice of the suffering soul, the hymn of the Spirit awaiting life, and crying out for it. That cry froze the very marrow in their bones.

The Spirit knocked at the sacred gate.

"What wilt thou?" asked a choir, whose voice rang through all the worlds.

"To go to God."

"Hast thou conquered?"

"I have conquered the flesh by abstinence; I have vanquished false speech by silence; I have vanquished false knowledge by humility; I have vanquished pride by charity; I have vanquished the earth by love; I have paid my tribute of suffering; I am purified by burning for the faith; I have striven for life by prayer; I wait adoring, and I am resigned."

But no reply came.

"The Lord be praised!" said the Spirit, believing himself rejected. His tears flowed, and fell in dew on the kneeling witnesses, who shuddered at the judgments of God.

On a sudden, the trumpets sounded for the victory of the Angel in this last test; their music filled space, like a sound met by an echo; it rang through it, making the universe tremble. Wilfrid and Minna felt the world shrink under their feet. They shivered, shaken by the terrors of apprehending the mystery that was to be accomplished.

There was, in fact, a vast stir, as though the eternal legions were forming to march, and gathering in spiral order. The worlds spun round, like clouds swept away by a mad whirlwind. It was all in a moment. The veils were rent; they

saw far above them, as it were, a star immeasurably brighter than the brightest star in the skies; it fell from its place like a thunderbolt, still flashing like the lightning, paling in its flight all that they had ever hitherto thought to be light.

This was the messenger bearing the good tidings, and the plume in his helmet was a flame of life. He left behind him a wake, filled up at once by the waves of the luminous flood he passed through.

He bore a palm and a sword; with the palm he touched the Spirit, and it was transfigured; its white wings spread without a sound.

At the communication of the Light, which changed the Spirit into a seraph, the garb of heavenly armor that clothed its glorious form, shed such radiance that the two seers were blinded. And, like the three apostles to whose sight Jesus appeared, Wilfrid and Minna were conscious of the burden of their bodies, which hindered them from complete and unclouded intuition of the Word and the True Life.

They saw the nakedness of their souls, and could measure their lack of brightness by comparison with the halo of the seraph, in which they stood as a shameful spot. They felt an ardent desire to rush back into the mire of the universe, to endure trial there, so as to be able some day to utter at the sacred gate the answer spoken by the glorified Spirit.

That seraph knelt down by the gate of the sanctuary, which he could at last see face to face, and said, pointing to them:

"Grant them to see more clearly. They will love the Lord, and proclaim His Word."

In answer to this prayer, a veil fell. Whether the unknown power that laid a hand on the two seers did for a moment annihilate their physical bodies, or whether it released their spirit to soar free, they were aware of a separation in themselves of the pure from the impure.

Then the seraph's tears rose round them in the form of a vapor which hid the lower worlds from their eyes, and wrapped them round and carried them away, and gave them oblivion of earthly meanings, and the power of understanding

the sense of divine things. The True Light appeared; it shed light on all creation, which, to them, looked barren indeed when they saw the source whence the worlds, earthly, spiritual, and divine, derive motion.

Each world had a centre to which tended every atom of the sphere; these worlds were themselves each an atom tending to the centre of their species. Each species had its centre in the vast celestial region that is in communion with the inexhaustible and flaming *motor power of all that exists.* Thus, from the most vast to the smallest of the worlds, and from the smallest sphere to the minutest atom of the creation that constitutes it, each thing was an individual, and yet all was one.

What, then, was the purpose of the Being, immutable in Essence and Faculty, but able to communicate them without loss, able to manifest them as phenomena without separating them from Himself, and causing everything outside Himself to be a creation immutable in its essence and mutable in its form? The two guests bidden to this high festival could only see the order and arrangement of beings, and wonder at their immediate ends. None but angels could go beyond that, and know the means and understand the purpose.

But that which those two chosen ones could contemplate, and of which they carried away the evidence to be a light to their souls for ever after, was the certainty of the action of worlds and beings, and a knowledge of the effort with which they all tend to a final result. They heard the various parts of the infinite forming a living melody; and at each beat, when the concord made itself felt as a deep expiration, the worlds, carried on by this unanimous motion, bowed to the Omnipotent One, who in His unapproachable centre made all things issue from Him and return to Him. This ceaseless alternation of voices and silence seemed to be the rhythm of the holy hymn that was echoed and sustained from age to age.

Wilfrid and Minna now understood some of the mysterious words of the being who on earth had appeared to them under

the form which was intelligible to each—Seraphitus to one, Seraphita to the other—seeing that here all was homogeneous. Light gave birth to melody, and melody to light; colors were both light and melody; motion was number endowed by the Word; in short, everything was at once sonorous, diaphanous, and mobile; so that, everything existing in everything else, extension knew no limits, and the angels could traverse it everywhere to the utmost depths of the infinite.

They saw then how puerile were the human sciences of which they had heard. Before them lay a view without any horizon, an abyss into which ardent craving invited them to plunge; but burdened with their hapless bodies, they had the desire without the power.

The seraph lightly spread his wings to take his flight, and did not look back at them—he had nothing now in common with the earth.

He sprang upwards; the vast span of his dazzling pinions covered the two seers like a beneficent shade, allowing them to raise their eyes and see him borne away in his glory escorted by the rejoicing archangel. He mounted like a beaming sun rising from the bosom of the waters; but, more happy he than the day star, and destined to more glorious ends, he was not bound, like inferior creatures, to a circular orbit; he followed the direct line of the infinite, tending undeviatingly to the central one, to be lost there in life eternal, and to absorb into his faculties and into his essence the power of rejoicing through love and the gift of comprehending through wisdom.

The spectacle that was then suddenly unveiled to the eyes of the two seers overpowered them by its vastness, for they felt like atoms whose smallness was comparable only to the minutest fraction which infinite divisibility allows man to conceive of, brought face to face with the infinitely numerous which God alone can contemplate as He contemplates Himself.

What humiliation and what greatness in those two points, strength and love, which the seraph's first desire had placed

as two links uniting the immensity of the inferior universe to the immensity of the superior universe! They understood the invisible bonds by which material worlds are attached to the spiritual worlds. As they recalled the stupendous efforts of the greatest human minds, they discerned the principle of melody as they heard the songs of heaven which gave them all the sensations of color, perfume, and thought, and reminded them of the innumerable details of all the creations, as an earthly song can revive the slenderest memories of love.

Strung by the excessive exaltation of their faculties to a pitch for which there is no word in any language, for a moment they were suffered to glance into the divine sphere. There all was gladness. Myriads of angels winged their way with one consent and without confusion, all alike but all different, as simple as the wild rose, as vast as worlds.

Wilfrid and Minna did not see them come nor go; they suddenly pervaded the infinite with their presence, as stars appear in the unfathomable ether. The blaze of all their diadems flashed into light in space, as the heavenly fire is lighted when the day rises among mountains. Waves of light fell from their hair, and their movements gave rise to undulating throbs like the dancing waves of a phosphorescent sea.

The two seers could discern the seraph as a darker object amid deathless legions, whose wings were as the mighty plumage of a forest swept by the breeze. And then, as though all the arrows of a quiver were shot off at once, the spirits dispelled with a breath every vestige of his former shape; as the seraph mounted higher he was purified, and ere long he was no more than a filmy image of what they had seen when he was first transfigured—lines of fire with no shadow. Up and up, receiving a fresh gift at each circle, while the sign of his election was transmitted to the highest heaven, whither he mounted purer and purer.

None of the voices ceased; the hymn spread in all its modes:

"Hail to him who rises to life! Come, flower of the worlds, diamond passed through the fire of affliction, pearl without

spot, desire without flesh, new link between earth and heaven, be thou Light! Conquering spirit, queen of the world, fly to take thy crown; victorious over the earth, receive thy diadem! Be one of us!"

The angel's virtues reappeared in all their beauty. His first longing for heaven was seen in the grace of tender infancy. His deeds adorned him with brightness like constellations; his acts of faith blazed like the hyacinth of the skies, the hue of the stars. Charity decked him with oriental pearls, treasured tears. Divine love bowered him in roses, and his pious resignation by its whiteness divested him of every trace of earthliness.

Soon, to their eyes, he was no more than a speck of flame, growing more and more intense, its motion lost in the melodious acclamations that hailed his arrival in heaven.

The celestial voices made the two exiles weep.

Suddenly the silence of death spread like a solemn veil from the highest to the lowest sphere, throwing Wilfrid and Minna into unutterable expectancy. At that instant the seraph was lost in the heart of the sanctuary, where he received the gift of eternal life.

Then they were aware of an impulse of intense adoration, which filled them with rapture mingled with awe. They felt that every being had fallen prostrate in the divine spheres, in the spiritual spheres, and in the worlds of darkness. The angels bent the knee to do honor to his glory, the spirits bent the knee to testify to their eagerness, and in the abyss all knelt, shuddering with awe.

A mighty shout of joy broke out, as a choked spring breaks forth again, tossing up its thousands of flower-like jets, mirroring the sun which turns the sparkling drops to diamond and pearl, at the instant when the seraph emerged, a blaze of light, crying:

"Eternal! Eternal! Eternal!"

The worlds heard him and acknowledged him; he became one with them as God is, and took possession of the infinite.

The seven divine worlds were aroused by his voice and answered him.

At this instant there was a great rush, as if whole stars were purified and went up in dazzling glory to be eternal. Perhaps the seraph's first duty was to call all creations filled with the Word to come to God.

But the hallelujah was already dying away in the ears of Wilfrid and Minna, like the last waves of dying music. The glories of heaven were already vanishing, like the hues of a setting sun amid curtains of purple and gold.

Death and impurity were repossessing themselves of their prey.

As they resumed the bondage of the flesh from which their spirit had for a moment been released by a sublime trance, the two mortals felt as on awakening in the morning from a night of splendid dreams, of which reminiscences float in the brain, though the senses have no knowledge of them, and human language would fail to express them. The blackness of the limbo into which they fell was the sphere where the sun of visible worlds shines.

"We must go down again," said Wilfrid to Minna.

"We will do as he bids us," replied she. "Having seen the worlds moving on towards God, we know the right way.—Our starry diadems are above!"

They fell into the abyss, into the dust of the lower worlds, and suddenly saw the earth as it were a crypt, of which the prospect was made clear to them by the light they brought back in their souls, for it still wrapped them in a halo, and through it they still vaguely heard the vanishing harmonies of heaven. This was the spectacle which of old fell on the mind's eye of the prophets. Ministers of various religions, all calling themselves true, kings consecrated by force and fear, warriors and conquerors sharing the nations, learned men and rich lording it over a refractory and suffering populace whom they trampled under foot,—these were all attended by their followers and their women, all were clad in robes of gold, silver and azure, covered with pearls and gems torn from the bowels of the earth or from the depths of the

sea by the perennial toil of sweating and blaspheming humanity. But in the eyes of the exiles this wealth and splendor, harvested with blood, were but filthy rags.

"What do ye here in motionless ranks?" asked Wilfrid.

They made no answer.

"What do ye here in motionless ranks?"

But they made no answer.

Wilfrid laid his hands on them and shouted:

"What do ye here in motionless ranks?"

By a common impulse they all opened their robes and showed him their bodies, dried up, eaten by worms, corrupt, falling to dust, and consumed by horrible diseases. "Ye lead the nations to death," said Wilfrid; "ye have defiled the earth, perverted the Word, prostituted justice. Ye have eaten the herb of the field, and now ye would kill the lambs! Do ye think that there is justification in showing your wounds? I shall warn those of my brethren who still can hear the Voice, that they may slake their thirst at the springs that you have hidden."

"Let us save our strength for prayer," said Minna. "It is not your mission to be a prophet, nor a redeemer, nor an evangelist. We are as yet only on the margin of the lowest sphere; let us strive to cleave through space on the pinions of prayer."

"You are my sole love!"

"You are my sole strength!"

"We have had a glimpse of the higher mysteries; we are, each to the other, the only creatures here below with whom joy and grief are conceivable. Come then, we will pray; we know the road, we will walk in it."

"Give me your hand," said the girl. "If we always walk together, the path will seem less rough and not so long."

"Only with you," said the young man, "could I traverse that vast desert without allowing myself to repine."

"And we will go to heaven together!" said she.

The clouds fell, forming a dark canopy. Suddenly the lovers found themselves kneeling by a dead body, which old

David was protecting from prying curiosity, and insisted on burying with his own hands.

Outside, the first summer of the nineteenth century was in all its glory; the lovers fancied they could hear a voice in the sunbeams. They breathed heavenly perfume from the new-born flowers, and said as they took each other by the hand:

"The vast ocean that gleams out there is an image of that we saw above!"

"Whither are you going?" asked Pastor Becker.

"We mean to go to God," said they. "Come with us, father."

GENEVA AND PARIS,
December 1833—*November* 1835.

LOUIS LAMBERT

DEDICATION:

"Et nunc et semper dilectæ dicatum."

LOUIS LAMBERT was born in 1797 at Montoire, a little town in the Vendômois, where his father owned a tannery of no great magnitude, and intended that his son should succeed him; but his precocious bent for study modified the paternal decision. For, indeed, the tanner and his wife adored Louis, their only child, and never contradicted him in anything.

At the age of five Louis had begun by reading the Old and New Testaments; and these two Books, including so many books, had sealed his fate. Could that childish imagination understand the mystical depths of the Scriptures? Could it so early follow the flight of the Holy Spirit across the worlds? Or was it merely attracted by the romantic touches which abound in those Oriental poems! Our narrative will answer these questions to some readers.

One thing resulted from this first reading of the Bible: Louis went all over Montoire begging for books, and he obtained them by those winning ways peculiar to children, which no one can resist. While devoting himself to these studies under no sort of guidance, he reached the age of ten.

At that period substitutes for the army were scarce; rich families secured them long beforehand to have them ready when the lots were drawn. The poor tanner's modest fortune did not allow of their purchasing a substitute for their son, and they saw no means allowed by law for evading the conscription but that of making him a priest; so, in 1807, they sent him to his maternal uncle, the parish priest of Mer, another small town on the Loire, not far from Blois. This

arrangement at once satisfied Louis' passion for knowledge, and his parents' wish not to expose him to the dreadful chances of war; and, indeed, his taste for study and precocious intelligence gave grounds for hoping that he might rise to high fortunes in the Church.

After remaining for about three years with his uncle, an old and not uncultured Oratorian, Louis left him early in 1811 to enter the college at Vendôme, where he was maintained at the cost of Madame de Staël.

Lambert owed the favor and patronage of this celebrated lady to chance, or shall we not say to Providence, who can smooth the path of forlorn genius? To us, indeed, who do not see below the surface of human things, such vicissitudes, of which we find many examples in the lives of great men, appear to be merely the result of physical phenomena; to most biographers the head of a man of genius rises above the herd as some noble plant in the fields attracts the eye of a botanist in its splendor. This comparison may well be applied to Louis Lambert's adventure; he was accustomed to spend the time allowed him by his uncle for holidays at his father's house; but instead of indulging, after the manner of schoolboys, in the sweets of the delightful *far niente* that tempts us at every age, he set out every morning with part of a loaf and his books, and went to read and meditate in the woods, to escape his mother's remonstrances, for she believed such persistent study to be injurious. How admirable is a mother's instinct! From that time reading was in Louis a sort of appetite which nothing could satisfy; he devoured books of every kind, feeding indiscriminately on religious works, history, philosophy, and physics. He has told me that he found indescribable delight in reading dictionaries for lack of other books, and I readily believed him. What scholar has not many a time found pleasure in seeking the probable meaning of some unknown word? The analysis of a word, its physiognomy and history, would be to Lambert matter for long dreaming. But these were not the instinctive dreams by which a boy accustoms himself to the phenomena of life,

steels himself to every moral or physical perception—an involuntary education which subsequently brings forth fruit both in the understanding and character of a man; no, Louis mastered the facts, and he accounted for them after seeking out both the principle and the end with the mother wit of a savage. Indeed, from the age of fourteen, by one of those startling freaks in which nature sometimes indulges, and which proved how anomalous was his temperament, he would utter quite simply ideas of which the depth was not revealed to me till a long time after.

"Often," he has said to me when speaking of his studies, "often have I made the most delightful voyage, floating on a word down the abyss of the past, like an insect embarked on a blade of grass tossing on the ripples of a stream. Starting from Greece, I would get to Rome, and traverse the whole extent of modern ages. What a fine book might be written of the life and adventures of a word! It has, of course, received various stamps from the occasions on which it has served its purpose; it has conveyed different ideas in different places; but is it not still grander to think of it under the three aspects of soul, body, and motion? Merely to regard it in the abstract, apart from its functions, its effects, and its influence, is enough to cast one into an ocean of meditations? Are not most words colored by the idea they represent? Then, to whose genius are they due? If it takes great intelligence to create a word, how old may human speech be? The combination of letters, their shapes, and the look they give to the word, are the exact reflection, in accordance with the character of each nation, of the unknown beings whose traces survive in us.

"Who can philosophically explain the transition from sensation to thought, from thought to word, from the word to its hieroglyphic presentment, from hieroglyphics to the alphabet, from the alphabet to written language, of which the eloquent beauty resides in a series of images, classified by rhetoric, and forming, in a sense, the hieroglyphics of thought? Was it not the ancient mode of

representing human ideas as embodied in the forms of animals that gave rise to the shapes of the first signs used in the East for writing down language? Then has it not left its traces by tradition on our modern languages, which have all seized some remnant of the primitive speech of nations, a majestic and solemn tongue whose grandeur and solemnity decrease as communities grow old; whose sonorous tones ring in the Hebrew Bible, and still are noble in Greece, but grow weaker under the progress of successive phases of civilization?

"Is it to this time-honored spirit that we owe the mysteries lying buried in every human word? In the word *True* do we not discern a certain imaginary rectitude? Does not the compact brevity of its sound suggest a vague image of chaste nudity and the simplicity of Truth in all things? The syllable seems to me singularly crisp and fresh.

"I chose the formula of an abstract idea on purpose, not wishing to illustrate the case by a word which should make it too obvious to the apprehension, as the word *Flight* for instance, which is a direct appeal to the senses.

"But is it not so with every root word? They all are stamped with a living power that comes from the soul, and which they restore to the soul through the mysterious and wonderful action and reaction between thought and speech. Might we not speak of it as a lover who finds on his mistress' lips as much love as he gives? Thus, by their mere physiognomy, words call to life in our brain the beings which they serve to clothe. Like all beings, there is but one place where their properties are at full liberty to act and develop. But the subject demands a science to itself perhaps!"

And he would shrug his shoulders as much as to say, "But we are too high and too low!"

Louis' passion for reading had on the whole been very well satisfied. The curé of Mer had two or three thousand volumes. This treasure had been derived from the plunder committed during the Revolution in the neighboring châteaux and abbeys. As a priest who had taken the oath, the worthy

man had been able to choose the best books from among these precious libraries, which were sold by the pound. In three years Louis Lambert had assimilated the contents of all the books in his uncle's library that were worth reading. The process of absorbing ideas by means of reading had become in him a very strange phenomenon. His eye took in six or seven lines at once, and his mind grasped the sense with a swiftness as remarkable as that of his eye; sometimes even one word in a sentence was enough to enable him to seize the gist of the matter.

His memory was prodigious. He remembered with equal exactitude the ideas he had derived from reading, and those which had occurred to him in the course of meditation or conversation. Indeed, he had every form of memory—for places, for names, for words, things, and faces. He not only recalled any object at will, but he saw them in his mind, situated, lighted, and colored as he had originally seen them. And this power he could exert with equal effect with regard to the most abstract efforts of the intellect. He could remember, as he said, not merely the position of a sentence in the book where he had met with it, but the frame of mind he had been in at remote dates. Thus his was the singular privilege of being able to retrace in memory the whole life and progress of his mind, from the ideas he had first acquired to the last thought evolved in it, from the most obscure to the clearest. His brain, accustomed in early youth to the mysterious mechanism by which human faculties are concentrated, drew from this rich treasury endless images full of life and freshness, on which he fed his spirit during those lucid spells of contemplation.

"Whenever I wish it," said he to me in his own language, to which a fund of remembrance gave precocious originality, "I can draw a veil over my eyes. Then I suddenly see within me a camera obscura, where natural objects are reproduced in purer forms than those under which they first appeared to my external sense."

At the age of twelve his imagination, stimulated by the

perpetual exercise of his faculties, had developed to a point which permitted him to have such precise concepts of things which he knew only from reading about them, that the image stamped on his mind could not have been clearer if he had actually seen them, whether this was by a process of analogy or that he was gifted with a sort of second sight by which he could command all nature.

"When I read the story of the battle of Austerlitz," said he to me one day, "I saw every incident. The roar of the cannon, the cries of the fighting men rang in my ears, and made my inmost self quiver; I could smell the powder; I heard the clatter of horses and the voices of men; I looked down on the plain where armed nations were in collision, just as if I had been on the heights of Santon. The scene was as terrifying as a passage from the Apocalypse." On the occasions when he brought all his powers into play, and in some degree lost consciousness of his physical existence, and lived on only by the remarkable energy of his mental powers, whose sphere was enormously expanded, he left space behind him, to use his own words.

But I will not here anticipate the intellectual phases of his life. Already, in spite of myself, I have reversed the order in which I ought to tell the history of this man, who transferred all his activities to thinking, as others throw all their life into action.

A strong bias drew his mind to mystical studies.

"*Abyssus abyssum,*" he would say. "Our spirit is abysmal and loves the abyss. In childhood, manhood, and old age we are always eager for mysteries in whatever form they present themselves."

This predilection was disastrous; if indeed his life can be measured by ordinary standards, or if we may gauge another's happiness by our own or by social notions. This taste for the "things of heaven," another phrase he was fond of using, this *mens divinior,* was due perhaps to the influence produced on his mind by the first books he read at his uncle's. Saint Theresa and Madame Guyon were a sequel to the Bible;

they had the first-fruits of his manly intelligence, and accustomed him to those swift reactions of the soul of which ecstasy is at once the result and the means. This line of study, this peculiar taste, elevated his heart, purified, ennobled it, gave him an appetite for the divine nature, and suggested to him the almost womanly refinement of feeling which is instinctive in great men; perhaps their sublime superiority is no more than the desire to devote themselves which characterizes woman, only transferred to the greatest things.

As a result of these early impressions, Louis passed immaculate through his school life; this beautiful virginity of the senses naturally resulted in the richer fervor of his blood, and in increased faculties of mind.

The Baroness de Staël, forbidden to come within forty leagues of Paris, spent several months of her banishment on an estate near Vendôme. One day, when out walking, she met on the skirts of the park the tanner's son, almost in rags, and absorbed in reading. The book was a translation of *Heaven and Hell*. At that time Monsieur Saint-Martin, Monsieur de Gence, and a few other French or half German writers were almost the only persons in the French Empire to whom the name of Swedenborg was known. Madame de Staël, greatly surprised, took the book from him with the roughness she affected in her questions, looks, and manners, and with a keen glance at Lambert,—

"Do you understand all this?" she asked.

"Do you pray to God?" said the child.

"Why? yes!"

"And do you understand Him?"

The Baroness was silent for a moment; then she sat down by Lambert, and began to talk to him. Unfortunately, my memory, though retentive, is far from being so trustworthy as my friend's, and I have forgotten the whole of the dialogue excepting those first words.

Such a meeting was of a kind to strike Madame de Staël very greatly; on her return home she said but little about

it, notwithstanding an effusiveness which in her became mere loquacity; but it evidently occupied her thoughts.

The only person now living who preserves any recollection of the incident, and whom I catechised to be informed of what few words Madame de Staël had let drop, could with difficulty recall these words spoken by the Baroness as describing Lambert, "He is a real seer."

Louis failed to justify in the eyes of the world the high hopes he had inspired in his protectress. The transient favor she showed him was regarded as a feminine caprice, one of the fancies characteristic of artist souls. Madame de Staël determined to save Louis Lambert alike from serving the Emperor or the Church, and to preserve him for the glorious destiny which, she thought, awaited him; for she made him out to be a second Moses snatched from the waters. Before her departure she instructed a friend of hers, Monsieur de Corbigny, to send her Moses in due course to the High School at Vendôme; then she probably forget him.

Having entered this college at the age of fourteen, early in 1811, Lambert would leave it at the end of 1814, when he had finished the course of Philosophy. I doubt whether during the whole time he ever heard a word of his benefactress—if indeed it was the act of a benefactress to pay for a lad's schooling for three years without a thought of his future prospects, after diverting him from a career in which he might have found happiness. The circumstances of the time, and Louis Lambert's character, may to a great extent absolve Madame de Staël for her thoughtlessness and her generosity. The gentleman who was to have kept up communications between her and the boy left Blois just at the time when Louis passed out of the college. The political events that ensued were then a sufficient excuse for this gentleman's neglect of the Baroness' protégé. The authoress of *Corinne* heard no more of her little Moses.

A hundred louis, which she placed in the hands of Monsieur de Corbigny, who died, I believe, in 1812, was not a

sufficiently large sum to leave lasting memories in Madame de Staël, whose excitable nature found ample pasture during the vicissitudes of 1814 and 1815, which absorbed all her interest.

At this time Louis Lambert was at once too proud and too poor to go in search of a patroness who was traveling all over Europe. However, he went on foot from Blois to Paris in the hope of seeing her, and arrived, unluckily, on the very day of her death. Two letters from Lambert to the Baroness remained unanswered. The memory of Madame de Staël's good intentions with regard to Louis remains, therefore, only in some few young minds, struck, as mine was, by the strangeness of the story.

No one who had not gone through the training at our college could understand the effect usually made on our minds by the announcement that a "new boy" had arrived, or the impression that such an adventure as Louis Lambert's was calculated to produce.

And here a little information must be given as to the primitive administration of this institution, originally half-military and half-monastic, to explain the new life which there awaited Lambert. Before the Revolution, the Oratorians, devoted, like the Society of Jesus, to the education of youth—succeeding the Jesuits, in fact, in certain of their establishments—had various provincial houses, of which the most famous were the colleges of Vendôme, of Tournon, of la Flèche, Pont-Levoy, Sorrèze, and Juilly. That at Vendôme, like the others, I believe, turned out a certain number of cadets for the army. The abolition of educational bodies, decreed by the Convention, had but little effect on the college at Vendôme. When the first crisis had blown over, the authorities recovered possession of their buildings; certain Oratorians, scattered about the country, came back to the college and re-opened it under the old rules, with the habits, practices, and customs which gave this school a character with which I have seen nothing at all comparable in any that I have visited since I left that establishment.

Standing in the heart of the town, on the little river Loir which flows under its walls, the college possesses extensive precincts, carefully enclosed by walls, and including all the buildings necessary for an institution on that scale: a chapel, a theatre, an infirmary, a bakehouse, gardens, and water supply. This college is the most celebrated home of learning in all the central provinces, and receives pupils from them and from the colonies. Distance prohibits any frequent visits from parents to their children.

The rule of the House forbids holidays away from it. Once entered there, a pupil never leaves till his studies are finished. With the exception of walks taken under the guidance of the Fathers, everything is calculated to give the School the benefit of conventual discipline; in my day the tawse was still a living memory, and the classical leather strap played its terrible part with all the honors. The punishments originally invented by the Society of Jesus, as alarming to the moral as to the physical man, was still in force in all the integrity of the original code.

Letters to parents were obligatory on certain days, so was confession. Thus our sins and our sentiments were all according to pattern. Everything bore the stamp of monastic rule. I well remember, among other relics of the ancient order, the inspection we went through every Sunday. We were all in our best, placed in file like soldiers to await the arrival of the two inspectors who, attended by the tutors and the tradesmen, examined us from the three points of view of dress, health, and morals.

The two or three hundred pupils lodged in the establishment were divided, according to ancient custom, into the *minimes* (the smallest), the little boys, the middle boys, and the big boys. The division of the *minimes* included the eighth and seventh classes; the little boys formed the sixth, fifth, and fourth; the middle boys were classed as third and second; and the first class comprised the senior students—of philosophy, rhetoric, the higher mathematics, and chemistry. Each of these divisions had its own building, class-

rooms, and play-ground, in the large common precincts on to which the classrooms opened, and beyond which was the refectory.

This dining-hall, worthy of an ancient religious Order, accommodated all the school. Contrary to the usual practice in educational institutions, we were allowed to talk at our meals, a tolerant Oratorian rule which enabled us to exchange plates according to our taste. This gastronomical barter was always one of the chief pleasures of our college life. If one of the "middle" boys at the head of his table wished for a helping of lentils instead of dessert—for we had dessert—the offer was passed down from one to another: "Dessert for lentils!" till some other epicure had accepted; then the plate of lentils was passed up to the bidder from hand to hand, and the plate of dessert returned by the same road. Mistakes were never made. If several identical offers were made, they were taken in order, and the formula would be, "Lentils number one for dessert number one" The tables were very long; our incessant barter kept everything moving; we transacted it with amazing eagerness; and the chatter of three hundred lads, the bustling to and fro of the servants employed in changing the plates, setting down the dishes, handing the bread, with the tours of inspection of the masters, made this refectory at Vendôme a scene unique in its way, and the amazement of visitors.

To make our life more tolerable, deprived as we were of all communication with the outer world and of family affection, we were allowed to keep pigeons and to have gardens. Our two or three hundred pigeon-houses, with a thousand birds nesting all round the outer wall, and above thirty garden plots, were a sight even stranger than our meals. But a full account of the peculiarities which made the college at Vendôme a place unique in itself and fertile in reminiscences to those who spent their boyhood there, would be weariness to the reader. Which of us all but remembers with delight, notwithstanding the bitterness of learning, the eccentric pleasures of that cloistered life? The sweetmeats purchased

by stealth in the course of our walks, permission obtained to play cards and devise theatrical performances during the holidays, such tricks and freedom as were necessitated by our seclusion; then, again, our military band, a relic of the cadets; our academy, our chaplain, our Father professors, and all our games permitted or prohibited, as the case might be; the cavalry charges on stilts, the long slides made in winter, the clatter of our clogs; and, above all, the trading transactions with "the shop" set up in the courtyard itself.

This shop was kept by a sort of cheap-jack, of whom big and little boys could procure—according to his prospectus—boxes, stilts, tools, Jacobin pigeons, and Nuns, Mass-books—an article in small demand—penknives, paper, pens, pencils, ink of all colors, balls and marbles; in short, the whole catalogue of the most treasured possessions of boys, including everything from sauce for the pigeons we were obliged to kill off, to the earthenware pots in which we set aside the rice from supper to be eaten at next morning's breakfast. Which of us is so unhappy as to have forgotten how his heart beat at the sight of this booth, open periodically during play-hours on Sundays, to which we went, each in his turn, to spend his little pocket-money; while the smallness of the sum allowed by our parents for these minor pleasures required us to make a choice among all the objects that appealed so strongly to our desires? Did ever a young wife, to whom her husband, during the first days of happiness, hands, twelve times a year, a purse of gold, the budget of her personal fancies, dream of so many different purchases, each of which would absorb the whole sum, as we imagined possible on the eve of the first Sunday in each month? For six francs during one night we owned every delight of that inexhaustible shop! And during Mass every response we chanted was mixed up in our minds with our secret calculations. Which of us all can recollect ever having had a sou left to spend on the Sunday following? And which of us but obeyed the instinctive law of social existence by pitying, helping, and despising those pariahs who, by the avarice or poverty of their parents, found themselves penniless?

Any one who forms a clear idea of this huge college, with its monastic buildings in the heart of a little town, and the four plots in which we were distributed as by a monastic rule, will easily conceive of the excitement that we felt at the arrival of a new boy, a passenger suddenly embarked on the ship. No young duchess, on her first appearance at Court, was ever more spitefully criticised than the new boy by the youths in his division. Usually during the evening play-hour before prayers, those sycophants who were accustomed to ingratiate themselves with the Fathers who took it in turns two and two for a week to keep an eye on us, would be the first to hear on trustworthy authority: "There will be a new boy to-morrow!" and then suddenly the shout, "A New Boy!—A New Boy!" rang through the courts. We hurried up to crowd round the superintendent and pester him with questions:

"Where was he coming from? What was his name? Which class would he be in?" and so forth.

Louis Lambert's advent was the subject of a romance worthy of the *Arabian Nights*. I was in the fourth class at the time—among the little boys. Our housemasters were two men whom we called Fathers from habit and tradition, though they were not priests. In my time there were indeed but three genuine Oratorians to whom this title legitimately belonged; in 1814 they all left the college, which had gradually become secularized, to find occupation about the altar in various country parishes, like the curé of Mer.

Father Haugoult, the master for the week, was not a bad man, but of very moderate attainments, and he lacked the tact which is indispensable for discerning the different characters of children, and graduating their punishment to their powers of resistance. Father Haugoult, then, began very obligingly to communicate to his pupils the wonderful events which were to end on the morrow in the advent of the most singular of "new boys." Games were at an end. All the children came round in silence to hear the story of Louis Lambert, discovered, like an aërolite, by Madame de Staël, in a corner of the wood. Monsieur Haugoult had to tell us all

about Madame de Staël; that evening she seemed to me ten feet high; I saw at a later time the picture of Corinne, in which Gérard represents her as so tall and handsome; and, alas! the woman painted by my imagination so far transcended this, that the real Madame de Staël fell at once in my estimation, even after I read her book of really masculine power, *De l'Allemagne.*

But Lambert at that time was an even greater wonder. Monsieur Mareschal, the headmaster, after examining him, had thought of placing him among the senior boys. It was Louis' ignorance of Latin that placed him so low as the fourth class, but he would certainly leap up a class every year; and, as a remarkable exception, he was to be one of the "Academy." *Proh pudor!* we were to have the honor of counting among the "little boys" one whose coat was adorned with the red ribbon displayed by the "Academicians" of Vendôme. These Academicians enjoyed distinguished privileges; they often dined at the director's table, and held two literary meetings annually, at which we were all present to hear their elucubrations. An Academician was a great man in embryo. And if every Vendôme scholar would speak the truth, he would confess that, in later life, an Academician of the great French Academy seemed to him far less remarkable than the stupendous boy who wore the cross and the imposing red ribbon which were the insignia of our "Academy."

It was very unusual to be one of that illustrious body before attaining to the second class, for the Academicians were expected to hold public meetings every Thursday during the holidays, and to read tales in verse or prose, epistles, essays, tragedies, dramas—compositions far above the intelligence of the lower classes. I long treasured the memory of a story called the "Green Ass," which was, I think, the masterpiece of this unknown Society. In the fourth, and an Academician! This boy of fourteen, a poet already, the protégé of Madame de Staël, a coming genius, said Father Haugoult, was to be one of us! a wizard, a youth capable of writing a composition or a translation while we were being called in to lessons, and

of learning his lessons by reading them through but once. Louis Lambert bewildered all our ideas. And Father Haugoult's curiosity and impatience to see this new boy added fuel to our excited fancy.

"If he has pigeons, he can have no pigeon-house; there is not room for another. Well, it cannot be helped," said one boy, since famous as an agriculturist.

"Who will sit next to him?" said another.

"Oh, I wish I might be his chum!" cried an enthusiast.

In school language, the word here rendered chum—*faisant*, or, in some schools, *copin*—expressed a fraternal sharing of the joys and evils of your childish existence, a community of interests that was fruitful of squabbling and making friends again, a treaty of alliance offensive and defensive. It is strange, but never in my time did I know brothers who were chums. If man lives by his feelings, he thinks perhaps that he will make his life the poorer if he merges an affection of his own choosing in a natural tie.

The impression made upon me by Father Haugoult's harangue that evening is one of the most vivid reminiscences of my childhood; I can compare it with nothing but my first reading of *Robinson Crusoe*. Indeed, I owe to my recollection of these prodigious impressions an observation that may perhaps be new as to the different sense attached to words by each hearer. The word in itself has no final meaning; we affect a word more than it affects us; its value is in relation to the images we have assimilated and grouped round it; but a study of this fact would require considerable elaboration, and lead us too far from our immediate subject.

Not being able to sleep, I had a long discussion with my next neighbor in the dormitory as to the remarkable being who on the morrow was to be one of us. This neighbor, who became an officer, and is now a writer with lofty philosophical views, Barchou de Penhoën, has not been false to his predestination, nor to the hazard of fortune by which the only two scholars of Vendôme, of whose fame Vendôme ever hears, were brought together in the same classroom, on the same

form, and under the same roof. Our comrade Dufaure had not, when this book was published, made his appearance in public life as a lawyer. The translator of Fichte, the expositor and friend of Ballanche, was already interested, as I myself was, in metaphysical questions; we often talked nonsense together about God, ourselves, and nature. He at that time affected pyrrhonism. Jealous of his place as leader, he doubted Lambert's precocious gifts; while I, having lately read *Les Enfants célèbres,* overwhelmed him with evidence, quoting young Montcalm, Pico della Mirandola, Pascal—in short, a score of early developed brains, anomalies that are famous in the history of the human mind, and Lambert's predecessors.

I was at the time passionately addicted to reading. My father, who was ambitious to see me in the École Polytechnique, paid for me to have a special course of private lessons in mathematics. My mathematical master was the librarian of the college, and allowed me to help myself to books without much caring what I chose to take from the library, a quiet spot where I went to him during play-hours to have my lesson. Either he was no great mathematician, or he was absorbed in some grand scheme, for he very willingly left me to read when I ought to have been learning, while he worked at I knew not what. So, by a tacit understanding between us, I made no complaints of being taught nothing, and he said nothing of the books I borrowed.

Carried away by this ill-timed mania, I neglected my studies to compose poems, which certainly can have shown no great promise, to judge by a line of too many feet which became famous among my companions—the beginning of an epic on the Incas:

"O Inca! O roi infortuné et malheureux!"

In derision of such attempts, I was nicknamed the Poet, but mockery did not cure me. I was always rhyming, in spite of good advice from Monsieur Mareschal, the head-

master, who tried to cure me of an unfortunately inveterate passion by telling me the fable of a linnet that fell out of the nest because it tried to fly before its wings were grown. I persisted in my reading; I became the least emulous, the idlest, the most dreamy of all the division of "little boys," and consequently the most frequently punished.

This autobiographical digression may give some idea of the reflections I was led to make in anticipation of Lambert's arrival. I was then twelve years old. I felt sympathy from the first for the boy whose temperament had some points of likeness to my own. I was at last to have a companion in day-dreams and meditations. Though I knew not yet what glory meant, I thought it glory to be the familiar friend of a child whose immortality was foreseen by Madame de Staël. To me Louis Lambert was as a giant.

The looked-for morrow came at last. A minute before breakfast we heard the steps of Monsieur Mareschal and of the new boy in the quiet courtyard. Every head was turned at once to the door of the classroom. Father Haugoult, who participated in our torments of curiosity, did not sound the whistle he used to reduce our mutterings to silence and bring us back to our tasks. We then saw this famous new boy, whom Monsieur Mareschal was leading by the hand. The superintendent descended from his desk, and the headmaster said to him solemnly, according to etiquette: "Monsieur, I have brought you Monsieur Louis Lambert; will you place him in the fourth class? He will begin work to-morrow."

Then, after speaking a few words in an undertone to the class-master, he said:

"Where can he sit?"

It would have been unfair to displace one of us for a newcomer; so as there was but one desk vacant, Louis Lambert came to fill it, next to me, for I had last joined the class. Though we still had some time to wait before lessons were over, we all stood up to look at Louis Lambert. Monsieur Mareschal heard our mutterings, saw how eager we were, and said, with the kindness that endeared him to us all:

"Well, well, but make no noise; do not disturb the other classes."

These words set us free to play some little time before breakfast, and we all gathered round Lambert while Monsieur Mareschal walked up and down the courtyard with Father Haugoult.

There were about eighty of us little demons, as bold as birds of prey. Though we ourselves had all gone through this cruel novitiate, we showed no mercy on a newcomer, never sparing him the mockery, the catechism, the impertinence, which were inexhaustible on such occasions, to the discomfiture of the neophyte, whose manners, strength, and temper were thus tested. Lambert, whether he was stoical or dumfounded, made no reply to any questions. One of us thereupon remarked that he was no doubt of the school of Pythagoras, and there was a shout of laughter. The new boy was thenceforth Pythagoras through all his life at the college. At the same time, Lambert's piercing eye, the scorn expressed in his face for our childishness, so far removed from the stamp of his own nature, the easy attitude he assumed, and his evident strength in proportion to his years, infused a certain respect into the veriest scamps among us. For my part, I kept near him, absorbed in studying him in silence.

Louis Lambert was slightly built, nearly five feet in height; his face was tanned, and his hands were burnt brown by the sun, giving him an appearance of manly vigor, which, in fact, he did not possess. Indeed, two months after he came to the college, when studying in the classroom had faded his vivid, so to speak, vegetable coloring, he became as pale and white as a woman.

His head was unusually large. His hair, of a fine, bright black in masses of curls, gave wonderful beauty to his brow, of which the proportions were extraordinary even to us heedless boys, knowing nothing, as may be supposed, of the auguries of phrenology, a science still in its cradle. The distinction of this prophetic brow lay principally in the exquisitely chis-

eled shape of the arches under which his black eyes sparkled, and which had the transparency of alabaster, the line having the unusual beauty of being perfectly level to where it met the top of the nose. But when you saw his eyes it was difficult to think of the rest of his face, which was indeed plain enough, for their look was full of a wonderful variety of expression; they seemed to have a soul in their depths. At one moment astonishingly clear and piercing, at another full of heavenly sweetness, those eyes became dull, almost colorless, as it seemed, when he was lost in meditation. They then looked like a window from which the sun had suddenly vanished after lighting it up. His strength and his voice were no less variable: equally rigid, equally unexpected. His tone could be as sweet as that of a woman compelled to own her love; at other times it was labored, rough, rugged, if I may use such words in a new sense. As to his strength, he was habitually incapable of enduring the fatigue of any game, and seemed weakly, almost infirm. But during the early days of his school-life, one of our little bullies having made game of this sickliness, which rendered him unfit for the violent exercise in vogue among his fellows, Lambert took hold with both hands of one of the class-tables, consisting of twelve large desks, face to face and sloping from the middle; he leaned back against the class-master's desk, steadying the table with his feet on the cross-bar below, and said:

"Now, ten of you try to move it!"

I was present, and can vouch for this strange display of strength; it was impossible to move the table.

Lambert had the gift of summoning to his aid at certain times the most extraordinary powers, and of concentrating all his forces on a given point. But children, like men, are wont to judge of everything by first impressions, and after the first few days we ceased to study Louis; he entirely belied Madame de Staël's prognostications, and displayed none of the prodigies we looked for in him.

After three months at school, Louis was looked upon as a quite ordinary scholar. I alone was allowed really to know

that sublime—why should I not say divine?—soul, for what is nearer to God than genius in the heart of a child? The similarity of our tastes and ideas made us friends and chums; our intimacy was so brotherly that our school-fellows joined our two names; one was never spoken without the other, and to call either they always shouted "Poet-and-Pythagoras!" Some other names had been known coupled in a like manner. Thus for two years I was the school friend of poor Louis Lambert; and during that time my life was so identified with his, that I am enabled now to write his intellectual biography.

It was long before I fully knew the poetry and the wealth of ideas that lay hidden in my companion's heart and brain. It was not till I was thirty years of age, till my experience was matured and condensed, till the flash of an intense illumination had thrown a fresh light upon it, that I was capable of understanding all the bearings of the phenomena which I witnessed at that early time. I benefited by them without understanding their greatness or their processes; indeed, I have forgotten some, or remember only the most conspicuous facts; still, my memory is now able to co-ordinate them, and I have mastered the secrets of that fertile brain by looking back to the delightful days of our boyish affection. So it was time alone that initiated me into the meaning of the events and facts that were crowded into that obscure life, as into that of many another man who is lost to science. Indeed, this narrative, so far as the expression and appreciation of many things is concerned, will be found full of what may be termed moral anachronisms, which perhaps will not detract from its peculiar interest.

In the course of the first few months after coming to Vendôme, Louis became the victim of a malady which, though the symptoms were invisible to the eye of our superiors, considerably interfered with the exercise of his remarkable gifts. Accustomed to live in the open air, and to the freedom of a purely haphazard education, happy in the tender care of an

Tower in which Balzac passed most of his time at college

old man who was devoted to him, used to meditating in the sunshine, he found it very hard to submit to college rules, to walk in the ranks, to live within the four walls of a room where eighty boys were sitting in silence on wooden forms each in front of his desk. His senses were developed to such perfection as gave them the most sensitive keenness, and every part of him suffered from this life in common.

The effluvia that vitiated the air, mingled with the odors of a classroom that was never clean or free from the fragments of our breakfasts or snacks, affected his sense of smell, the sense which, being more immediately connected than the others with the nerve-centres of the brain, must, when shocked, cause invisible disturbance to the organs of thought.

Besides these elements of impurity in the atmosphere, there were lockers in the classrooms in which the boys kept their miscellaneous plunder—pigeons killed for fête days, or tidbits filched from the dinner-table. In each classroom, too, there was a large stone slab, on which two pails full of water were kept standing, a sort of sink, where we every morning washed our faces and hands, one after another, in the master's presence. We then passed on to a table, where women combed and powdered our hair. Thus the place, being cleaned but once a day before we were up, was always more or less dirty. In spite of numerous windows and lofty doors, the air was constantly fouled by the smells from the washing-place, the hairdressing, the lockers, and the thousand messes made by the boys, to say nothing of their eighty closely packed bodies. And this sort of *humus,* mingling with the mud we brought in from the playing-yard, produced a suffocatingly pestilent muck-heap.

The loss of the fresh and fragrant country air in which he had hitherto lived, the change of habits and strict discipline, combined to depress Lambert. With his elbow on his desk and his head supported on his left hand, he spent the hours of study gazing at the trees in the court or the clouds in the sky; he seemed to be thinking of his lessons; but the master, seeing his pen motionless, or the sheet before him still a blank, would call out:

"Lambert, you are doing nothing!"

This *"you are doing nothing!"* was a pin-thrust that wounded Louis to the quick. And then he never earned the rest of play-time; he always had impositions to write. The imposition, a punishment which varies according to the practice of different schools, consisted at Vendôme of a certain number of lines to be written out in play hours. Lambert and I were so overpowered with impositions, that we had not six free days during the two years of our school friendship. But for the books we took out of the library, which maintained some vitality in our brains, this system of discipline would have reduced us to idiotcy. Want of exercise is fatal to children. The habit of preserving a dignified appearance, begun in tender infancy, has, it is said, a visible effect on the constitution of royal personages when the faults of such an education are not counteracted by the life of the battle-field or the laborious sport of hunting. And if the laws of etiquette and Court manners can act on the spinal marrow to such an extent as to affect the pelvis of kings, to soften their cerebral tissue, and so degenerate the race, what deep-seated mischief, physical and moral, must result in schoolboys from the constant lack of air, exercise, and cheerfulness!

Indeed, the rules of punishment carried out in schools deserve the attention of the Office of Public Instruction when any thinkers are to be found there who do not think exclusively of themselves.

We incurred the infliction of an imposition in a thousand ways. Our memory was so good that we never learned a lesson. It was enough for either of us to hear our class-fellows repeat the task in French, Latin, or grammar, and we could say it when our turn came; but if the master, unfortunately, took it into his head to reverse the usual order and call upon us first, we very often did not even know what the lesson was; then the imposition fell in spite of our most ingenious excuses. Then we always put off writing our exercises till the last moment; if there were a book to be finished,

or if we were lost in thought, the task was forgotten—again an imposition. How often have we scribbled an exercise during the time when the head-boy, whose business it was to collect them when we came into school, was gathering them from the others!

In addition to the moral misery which Lambert went through in trying to acclimatize himself to college life, there was a scarcely less cruel apprenticeship through which every boy had to pass: to those bodily sufferings which seemed infinitely varied. The tenderness of a child's skin needs extreme care, especially in winter, when a school-boy is constantly exchanging the frozen air of the muddy playing-yard for the stuffy atmosphere of the classroom. The "little boys" and the smallest of all, for lack of a mother's care, were martyrs to chilblains and chaps so severe that they had to be regularly dressed during the breakfast hour; but this could only be very indifferently done to so many damaged hands, toes, and heels. A good many of the boys indeed were obliged to prefer the evil to the remedy; the choice constantly lay between their lessons waiting to be finished or the joys of a slide, and waiting for a bandage carelessly put on, and still more carelessly cast off again. Also it was the fashion in the school to gibe at the poor, feeble creatures who went to be doctored; the bullies vied with each other in snatching off the rags which the infirmary nurse had tied on. Hence, in winter, many of us, with half-dead feet and fingers, sick with pain, were incapable of work, and punished for not working. The Fathers, too often deluded by shammed ailments, would not believe in real suffering.

The price paid for our schooling and board also covered the cost of clothing. The committee contracted for the shoes and clothes supplied to the boys; hence the weekly inspection of which I have spoken. This plan, though admirable for the manager, is always disastrous to the managed. Woe to the boy who indulged in the bad habit of treading his shoes down at heel, of cracking the shoe-leather, or wearing out the soles too fast, whether from a defect in his gait, or by fidgeting dur-

ing lessons in obedience to the instinctive need of movement common to all children. That boy did not get through the winter without great suffering. In the first place, his chilblains would ache and shoot as badly as a fit of the gout; then the rivets and pack-thread intended to repair the shoes would give way, or the broken heels would prevent the wretched shoes from keeping on his feet; he was obliged to drag them wearily along the frozen roads, or sometimes to dispute their possession with the clay soil of the district; the water and snow got in through some unnoticed crack or ill-sewn patch, and the foot would swell.

Out of sixty boys, not ten perhaps could walk without some special form of torture; and yet they all kept up with the body of the troop, dragged on by the general movement, as men are driven through life by life itself. Many a time some proud-tempered boy would shed tears of rage while summoning his remaining energy to run ahead and get home again in spite of pain, so sensitively afraid of laughter or of pity—two forms of scorn—is the still tender soul at that age.

At school, as in social life, the strong despise the feeble without knowing in what true strength consists.

Nor was this all. No gloves. If by good hap a boy's parents, the infirmary nurse, or the headmaster gave gloves to a particularly delicate lad, the wags or the big boys of the class would put them on the stove, amused to see them dry and shrivel; or if the gloves escaped the marauders, after getting wet they shrunk as they dried for want of care. No, gloves were impossible. Gloves were a privilege, and boys insist on equality.

Louis Lambert fell a victim to all these varieties of torment. Like many contemplative men, who, when lost in thought, acquire a habit of mechanical motion, he had a mania for fidgeting with his shoes, and destroyed them very quickly. His girlish complexion, the skin of his ears and lips, cracked with the least cold. His soft, white hands grew red and swollen. He had perpetual colds. Thus he was a

constant sufferer till he became inured to school-life. Taught at last by cruel experience, he was obliged to "look after his things," to use the school phrase. He was forced to take care of his locker, his desk, his clothes, his shoes; to protect his ink, his books, his copy-paper, and his pens from pilferers; in short, to give his mind to the thousand details of our trivial life, to which more selfish and commonplace minds devoted such strict attention—thus infallibly securing prizes for "proficiency" and "good conduct"—while they were overlooked by a boy of the highest promise, who, under the hand of an almost divine imagination, gave himself up with rapture to the flow of his ideas.

This was not all. There is a perpetual struggle going on between the masters and the boys, a struggle without truce, to be compared with nothing else in the social world, unless it be the resistance of the opposition to the ministry in a representative government. But journalists and opposition speakers are probably less prompt to take advantage of a weak point, less extreme in resenting an injury, and less merciless in their mockery than boys are in regard to those who rule over them. It is a task to put angels out of patience. An unhappy class-master must then not be too severely blamed, ill-paid as he is, and consequently not too competent, if he is occasionally unjust or out of temper. Perpetually watched by a hundred mocking eyes, and surrounded with snares, he sometimes revenges himself for his own blunders on the boys who are only too ready to detect them.

Unless for serious misdemeanors, for which there were other forms of punishment, the strap was regarded at Vendôme as the *ultima ratio Patrum*. Exercises forgotten, lessons ill learned, common ill behavior were sufficiently punished by an imposition, but offended dignity spoke in the master through the strap. Of all the physical torments to which we were exposed, certainly the most acute was that inflicted by this leathern instrument, about two fingers wide, applied to our poor little hands with all the strength and all the fury of the administrator. To endure this classical form

of correction, the victim knelt in the middle of the room. He had to leave his form and go to kneel down near the master's desk under the curious and generally merciless eyes of his fellows. To sensitive natures these preliminaries were an introductory torture, like the journey from the Palais de Justice to the Place de Grève which the condemned used to make to the scaffold.

Some boys cried out and shed bitter tears before or after the application of the strap; others accepted the infliction with stoic calm; it was a question of nature; but few could control an expression of anguish in anticipation.

Louis Lambert was constantly enduring the strap, and owed it to a peculiarity of his physiognomy of which he was for a long time quite unconscious. Whenever he was suddenly roused from a fit of abstraction by the master's cry, "You are doing nothing!" it often happened that, without knowing it, he flashed at his teacher a look full of fierce contempt, and charged with thought, as a Leyden jar is charged with electricity. This look, no doubt, discomfited the master, who, indignant at this unspoken retort, wished to cure his scholar of that thunderous flash.

The first time the Father took offence at this ray of scorn, which struck him like a lightning-flash, he made this speech, as I well remember:

"If you look at me again in that way, Lambert, you will get the strap."

At these words every nose was in the air, every eye looked alternately at the master and at Louis. The observation was so utterly foolish, that the boy again looked at the Father, overwhelming him with another flash. From this arose a standing feud between Lambert and his master, resulting in a certain amount of "strap." Thus did he first discover the power of his eye.

The hapless poet, so full of nerves, as sensitive as a woman, under the sway of chronic melancholy, and as sick with genius as a girl with love that she pines for, knowing nothing of it;—this boy, at once so powerful and so weak, trans

planted by "Corinne" from the country he loved, to be squeezed in the mould of a collegiate routine to which every spirit and every body must yield, whatever their range or temperament, accepting its rule and its uniform as gold is crushed into round coin under the press; Louis Lambert suffered in every spot where pain can touch the soul or the flesh. Stuck on a form, restricted to the acreage of his desk, a victim of the strap and to a sickly frame, tortured in every sense, environed by distress—everything compelled him to give his body up to the myriad tyrannies of school life; and, like the martyrs who smiled in the midst of suffering, he took refuge in heaven, which lay open to his mind. Perhaps this life of purely inward emotions helped him to see something of the mysteries he so entirely believed in!

Our independence, our illicit amusements, our apparent waste of time, our persistent indifference, our frequent punishments and aversion for our exercises and impositions, earned us a reputation, which no one cared to controvert, for being an idle and incorrigible pair. Our masters treated us with contempt, and we fell into utter disgrace with our companions, from whom we concealed our secret studies for fear of being laughed at. This hard judgment, which was injustice in the masters, was but natural in our schoolfellows. We could neither play ball, nor run races, nor walk on stilts. On exceptional holidays, when amnesty was proclaimed and we got a few hours of freedom, we shared in none of the popular diversions of the school. Aliens from the pleasures enjoyed by the others, we were outcasts, sitting forlorn under a tree in the playing-ground. The Poet-and-Pythagoras formed an exception and led a life apart from the life of the rest.

The penetrating instinct and unerring conceit of schoolboys made them feel that we were of a nature either far above or far beneath their own; hence some simply hated our aristocratic reserve, others merely scorned our ineptitude. These feelings were equally shared by us without our knowing it; perhaps I have but now divined them. We lived exactly like two rats, huddled into the corner of the room

where our desks were, sitting there alike during lesson time and play hours. This strange state of affairs inevitably and in fact placed us on a footing of war with all the other boys in our division. Forgotten for the most part, we sat there very contentedly; half happy, like two plants, two images who would have been missed from the furniture of the room. But the most aggressive of our schoolfellows would sometimes torment us, just to show their malignant power, and we responded with stolid contempt, which brought many a thrashing down on the Poet-and-Pythagoras.

Lambert's home-sickness lasted for many months. I know no words to describe the dejection to which he was a prey. Louis has taken the glory off many a masterpiece for me. We had both played the part of the "Leper of Aosta," and had both experienced the feelings described in Monsieur de Maistre's story, before we read them as expressed by his eloquent pen. A book may, indeed, revive the memories of our childhood, but it can never compete with them successfully. Lambert's woes had taught me many a chant of sorrow far more appealing than the finest passages in "Werther." And, indeed, there is no possible comparison between the pangs of a passion condemned, whether rightly or wrongly, by every law, and the grief of a poor child pining for the glorious sunshine, the dews of the valley, and liberty. Werther is the slave of desire; Louis Lambert was an enslaved soul. Given equal talent, the more pathetic sorrow, founded on desires which, being purer, are the more genuine, must transcend the wail even of genius.

After sitting for a long time with his eyes fixed on a lime-tree in the playground, Louis would say just a word; but that word would reveal an infinite speculation.

"Happily for me," he exclaimed one day, "there are hours of comfort when I feel as though the walls of the room had fallen and I were away—away in the fields! What a pleasure it is to let oneself go on the stream of one's thoughts as a bird is borne up on its wings!"

"Why is green a color so largely diffused throughout crea-

tion?" he would ask me. "Why are there so few straight lines in nature? Why is it that man, in his structures, rarely introduces curves? Why is it that he alone, of all creatures, has a sense of straightness?"

These queries revealed long excursions in space. He had, I am sure, seen vast landscapes, fragrant with the scent of woods. He was always silent and resigned, a living elegy, always suffering but unable to complain of suffering. An eagle that needed the world to feed him, shut in between four narrow, dirty walls; and thus his life became an ideal life in the strictest meaning of the words. Filled as he was with contempt of the almost useless studies to which we were harnessed, Louis went on his skyward way absolutely unconscious of the things about us.

I, obeying the imitative instinct that is so strong in childhood, tried to regulate my life in conformity with his. And Louis the more easily infected me with the sort of torpor in which deep contemplation leaves the body, because I was younger and more impressionable than he. Like two lovers, we got into the habit of thinking together in a common reverie. His intuitions had already acquired that acuteness which must surely characterize the intellectual perceptiveness of great poets and often bring them to the verge of madness.

"Do you ever feel," said he to me one day, "as though imagined suffering affected you in spite of yourself? If, for instance, I think with concentration of the effect that the blade of my penknife would have in piercing my flesh, I feel an acute pain as if I had really cut myself; only the blood is wanting But the pain comes suddenly, and startles me like a sharp noise breaking profound silence. Can an idea cause physical pain?—What do you say to that, eh?"

When he gave utterance to such subtle reflections, we both fell into artless meditation; we set to work to detect in ourselves the inscrutable phenomena of the origin of thoughts, which Lambert hoped to discover in their earliest germ, so as to describe some day the unknown process. Then, after much discussion, often mixed up with childish notions, a look would

flash from Lambert's eager eyes; he would grasp my hand, and a word from the depths of his soul would show the current of his mind.

"Thinking is seeing," said he one day, carried away by some objection raised as to the first principles of our organization. "Every human science is based on deduction, which is a slow process of seeing by which we work up from the effect to the cause; or, in a wider sense, all poetry, like every work of art, proceeds from a swift vision of things."

He was a spiritualist (as opposed to materialism); but I would venture to contradict him, using his own arguments to consider the intellect as a purely physical phenomenon. We both were right. Perhaps the words materialism and spiritualism express the two faces of the same fact. His considerations on the substance of the mind led to his accepting, with a certain pride, the life of privation to which we were condemned in consequence of our idleness and our indifference to learning. He had a certain consciousness of his own powers which bore him up through his spiritual cogitations. How delightful it was to me to feel his soul acting on my own! Many a time have we remained sitting on our form, both buried in one book, having quite forgotten each other's existence, and yet not apart; each conscious of the other's presence, and bathing in an ocean of thought, like two fish swimming in the same waters.

Our life, apparently, was merely vegetating; but we lived through our heart and brain.

Lambert's influence over my imagination left traces that still abide. I used to listen hungrily to his tales, full of the marvels which make men, as well as children, rapturously devour stories in which truth assumes the most grotesque forms. His passion for mystery, and the credulity natural to the young, often led us to discuss Heaven and Hell. Then Louis, by expounding Swedenborg, would try to make me share in his beliefs concerning angels. In his least logical arguments there were still amazing observations as to the powers of man, which gave his words that color of truth

without which nothing can be done in any art. The romantic end he foresaw as the destiny of man was calculated to flatter the yearning which tempts blameless imaginations to give themselves up to beliefs. Is it not during the youth of a nation that its dogmas and idols are conceived? And are not the supernatural beings before whom the people tremble the personification of their feelings and their magnified desires?

All that I can now remember of the poetical conversations we held together concerning the Swedish prophet, whose works I have since had the curiosity to read, may be told in a few paragraphs.

In each of us there are two distinct beings. According to Swedenborg, the angel is an individual in whom the inner being conquers the external being. If a man desires to earn his call to be an angel, as soon as his mind reveals to him his twofold existence, he must strive to foster the delicate angelic essence that exists within him. If, for lack of a lucid appreciation of his destiny, he allows bodily action to predominate, instead of confirming his intellectual being, all his powers will be absorbed in the use of his external senses, and the angel will slowly perish by the materialization of both natures. In the contrary case, if he nourishes his inner being with the aliment needful to it, the soul triumphs over matter and strives to get free.

When they separate by the act of what we call death, the angel, strong enough then to cast off its wrappings, survives and begins its real life. The infinite variety which differentiates individual men can only be explained by this twofold existence, which, again, is proved and made intelligible by that variety.

In point of fact, the wide distance between a man whose torpid intelligence condemns him to evident stupidity, and one who, by the exercise of his inner life, has acquired the gift of some power, allows us to suppose that there is as great a difference between men of genius and other beings as there

is between the blind and those who see. This hypothesis, since it extends creation beyond all limits, gives us, as it were, the clue to heaven. The beings who, here on earth, are apparently mingled without distinction, are there distributed, according to their inner perfection, in distinct spheres whose speech and manners have nothing in common. In the invisible world, as in the real world, if some native of the lower spheres comes, all unworthy, into a higher sphere, not only can he never understand the customs and language there, but his mere presence paralyzes the voice and hearts of those who dwell therein.

Dante, in his *Divine Comedy,* had perhaps some slight intuition of those spheres which begin in the world of torment, and rise, circle on circle, to the highest heaven. Thus Swedenborg's doctrine is the product of a lucid spirit noting down the innumerable signs by which the angels manifest their presence among men.

This doctrine, which I have endeavored to sum up in a more or less consistent form, was set before me by Lambert with all the fascination of mysticism, swathed in the wrappings of the phraseology affected by mystical writers: an obscure language full of abstractions, and taking such effect on the brain, that there are books by Jacob Bœhm, Swedenborg, and Madame Guyon, so strangely powerful that they give rise to phantasies as various as the dreams of the opium-eater. Lambert told me of mystical facts so extraordinary, he so acted on my imagination, that he made my brain reel. Still, I loved to plunge into that realm of mystery, invisible to the senses, in which every one likes to dwell, whether he pictures it to himself under the indefinite ideal of the Future, or clothes it in the more solid guise of romance. These violent revulsions of the mind on itself gave me, without my knowing it, a comprehension of its power, and accustomed me to the workings of the mind.

Lambert himself explained everything by his theory of the angels. To him pure love—love as we dream of it in youth—was the coalescence of two angelic natures. Nothing

could exceed the fervency with which he longed to meet a woman angel. And who better than he could inspire or feel love? If anything could give an impression of an exquisite nature, was it not the amiability and kindliness that marked his feelings, his words, his actions, his slightest gestures, the conjugal regard that united us as boys, and that we expressed when we called ourselves *chums*?

There was no distinction for us between my ideas and his. We imitated each other's handwriting, so that one might write the tasks of both. Thus, if one of us had a book to finish and to return to the mathematical master, he could read on without interruption while the other scribbled off his exercise and imposition. We did our tasks as though paying a task on our peace of mind. If my memory does not play me false, they were sometimes of remarkable merit when Lambert did them. But on the foregone conclusion that we were both of us idiots, the master always went through them under a rooted prejudice, and even kept them to read to be laughed at by our schoolfellows.

I remember one afternoon, at the end of the lesson, which lasted from two till four, the master took possession of a page of translation by Lambert. The passage began with, *Caius Gracchus, vir nobilis;* Lambert had construed this by "Caius Gracchus had a noble heart."

"Where do you find 'heart' in *nobilis?*" said the Father sharply.

And there was a roar of laughter, while Lambert looked at the master in some bewilderment.

"What would Madame la Baronne de Staël say if she could know that you make such nonsense of a word that means of noble family, of patrician rank?"

"She would say that you were an ass!" said I in a muttered tone.

"Master Poet, you will stay in for a week," replied the master, who unfortunately overheard me.

Lambert simply repeated, looking at me with inexpressible affection, *"Vir nobilis!"*

Madame de Staël was, in fact, partly the cause of Lambert's troubles. On every pretext masters and pupils threw the name in his teeth, either in irony or in reproof.

Louis lost no time in getting himself "kept in" to share my imprisonment. Freer thus than in any other circumstances, we could talk the whole day long in the silence of the dormitories, where each boy had a cubicle six feet square, the partitions consisting at the top of open bars. The doors, fitted with gratings, were locked at night and opened in the morning under the eye of the Father whose duty it was to superintend our rising and going to bed. The creak of these gates, which the college servants unlocked with remarkable expedition, was a sound peculiar to that college. These little cells were our prison, and boys were sometimes shut up there for a month at a time. The boys in these coops were under the stern eye of the prefect, a sort of censor who stole up at certain hours, or at unexpected moments, with a silent step, to hear if we were talking instead of writing our impositions. But a few walnut shells dropped on the stairs, or the sharpness of our hearing, almost always enabled us to beware of his coming, so we could give ourselves up without anxiety to our favorite studies. However, as books were prohibited, our prison hours were chiefly filled up with metaphysical discussions, or with relating singular facts connected with the phenomena of mind.

One of the most extraordinary of these incidents beyond question is this, which I will here record, not only because it concerns Lambert, but because it perhaps was the turning-point of his scientific career. By the law of custom in all schools, Thursday and Sunday were holidays; but the services, which we were made to attend very regularly, so completely filled up Sunday, that we considered Thursday our only real day of freedom. After once attending Mass, we had a long day before us to spend in walks in the country round the town of Vendôme. The manor of Rochambeau was the most interesting object of our excursions, perhaps by reason of its distance; the smaller boys were very seldom

taken on so fatiguing an expedition. However, once or twice a year the class-masters would hold out Rochambeau as a reward for diligence.

In 1812, towards the end of the spring, we were to go there for the first time. Our anxiety to see this famous château of Rochambeau, where the owner sometimes treated the boys to milk, made us all very good, and nothing hindered the outing. Neither Lambert nor I had ever seen the pretty valley of the Loir where the house stood. So his imagination and mine were much excited by the prospect of this excursion, which filled the school with traditional glee. We talked of it all the evening, planning to spend in fruit or milk such money as we had saved, against all the habits of school-life.

After dinner next day, we set out at half-past twelve, each provided with a square hunch of bread, given to us for our afternoon snack. And off we went, as gay as swallows, marching in a body on the famous château with an eagerness which would at first allow of no fatigue. When we reached the hill, whence we looked down on the house standing half-way down the slope, on the devious valley through which the river winds and sparkles between meadows in graceful curves —a beautiful landscape, one of those scenes to which the keen emotions of early youth or of love lend such a charm, that it is wise never to see them again in later years—Louis Lambert said to me, "Why, I saw this last night in a dream."

He recognized the clump of trees under which we were standing, the grouping of the woods, the color of the water, the turrets of the château, the details, the distance, in fact every part of the prospect which we looked on for the first time. We were mere children; I, at any rate, who was but thirteen; Louis, at fifteen, might have the precocity of genius, but at that time we were incapable of falsehood in the most trivial matters of our life as friends. Indeed, if Lambert's powerful mind had any presentiment of the importance of such facts, he was far from appreciating their whole bearing; and he was quite astonished by this incident. I asked him if he had not perhaps been brought to Rochambeau in his

infancy, and my question struck him; but after thinking it over, he answered in the negative. This incident, analogous to what may be known of the phenomena of sleep in several persons, will illustrate the beginnings of Lambert's line of talent; he took it, in fact, as the basis of a whole system, using a fragment—as Cuvier did in another branch of inquiry—as a clue to the reconstruction of a complete system.

At this moment we were sitting together on an old oak-stump, and after a few minutes' reflection, Louis said to me:

"If the landscape did not come to me—which it is absurd to imagine—I must have come here. If I was here while I was asleep in my cubicle, does not that constitute a complete severance of my body and my inner being? Does it not prove some inscrutable locomotive faculty in the spirit with effects resembling those of locomotion in the body? Well, then, if my spirit and my body can be severed during sleep, why should I not insist on their separating in the same way while I am awake? I see no half-way mean between the two propositions.

"But if we go further into details: Either the facts are due to the action of a faculty which brings out a second being to whom my body is merely a husk, since I was in my cell, and yet I saw the landscape—and this upsets many systems; or the facts took place either in some nerve centre, of which the name is yet to be discovered, where our feelings dwell and move; or else in the cerebral centre, where ideas are formed. This last hypothesis gives rise to some strange questions. I walked, I saw, I heard. Motion is inconceivable but in space, sound acts only at certain angles or on surfaces, color is caused only by light. If, in the dark, with my eyes shut, I saw, in myself, colored objects; if I heard sounds in the most perfect silence and without the conditions requisite for the production of sound; if without stirring I traversed wide tracts of space, there must be inner faculties independent of the external laws of physics. Material nature must be penetrable by the spirit.

"How is it that men have hitherto given so little thought

to the phenomena of sleep, which seem to prove that man has a double life? May there not be a new science lying beneath them?" he added, striking his brow with his hand. "If not the elements of a science, at any rate the revelation of stupendous powers in man; at least they prove a frequent severance of our two natures, the fact I have been thinking out for a very long time. At last, then, I have hit on evidence to show the superiority that distinguishes our latent senses from our corporeal senses! *Homo duplex!*

"And yet," he went on, after a pause, with a doubtful shrug, "perhaps we have not two natures; perhaps we are merely gifted with personal and perfectible qualities, of which the development within us produces certain unobserved phenomena of activity, penetration, and vision. In our love of the marvelous, a passion begotten of our pride, we have translated these effects into poetical inventions, because we did not understand them. It is so convenient to deify the incomprehensible!

"I should, I own, lament over the loss of my illusions. I so much wished to believe in our twofold nature and in Swedenborg's angels. Must this new science destroy them? Yes; for the study of our unknown properties involves us in a science that appears to be materialistic, for the Spirit uses, divides, and animates the Substance; but it does not destroy it."

He remained pensive, almost sad. Perhaps he saw the dreams of his youth as swaddling clothes that he must soon shake off.

"Sight and hearing are, no doubt, the sheaths for a very marvelous instrument," said he, laughing at his own figure of speech.

Always when he was talking to me of Heaven and Hell, he was wont to treat of Nature as being master; but now, as he pronounced these last words, big with prescience, he seemed to soar more boldly than ever above the landscape, and his forehead seemed ready to burst with the afflatus of genius. His powers—mental powers we must call them till

some new term is found—seemed to flash from the organs intended to express them. His eyes shot out thoughts; his uplifted hand, his silent but tremulous lips were eloquent; his burning glance was radiant; at last his head, as though too heavy, or exhausted by too eager a flight, fell on his breast. This boy—this giant—bent his head, took my hand and clasped it in his own, which was damp, so fevered was he for the search for truth; then, after a pause, he said:

"I shall be famous!—And you too," he added after a pause. "We will both study the Chemistry of the Will."

Noble soul! I recognized his superiority, though he took great care never to make me feel it. He shared with me all the treasures of his mind, and regarded me as instrumental in his discoveries, leaving me the credit of my insignificant contributions. He was always as gracious as a woman in love; he had all the bashful feeling, the delicacy of soul which make life happy and pleasant to endure.

On the following day he began writing what he called a *Treatise on the Will;* his subsequent reflections led to many changes in its plan and method; but the incident of that day was certainly the germ of the work, just as the electric shock always felt by Mesmer at the approach of a particular manservant was the starting-point of his discoveries in magnetism, a science till then interred under the mysteries of Isis, of Delphi, of the cave of Trophonius, and rediscovered by that prodigious genius, close on Lavater, and the precursor of Gall.

Lambert's ideas, suddenly illuminated by this flash of light, assumed vaster proportions; he disentangled certain truths from his many acquisitions and brought them into order; then, like a founder, he cast the model of his work. At the end of six months' indefatigable labor, Lambert's writings excited the curiosity of our companions, and became the object of cruel practical jokes which led to a fatal issue.

One day one of the masters, who was bent on seeing the manuscripts, enlisted the aid of our tyrants, and came to seize, by force, a box that contained the precious papers.

Lambert and I defended it with incredible courage. The trunk was locked, our aggressors could not open it, but they tried to smash it in the struggle, a stroke of malignity at which we shrieked with rage. Some of the boys, with a sense of justice, or struck perhaps by our heroic defence, advised the attacking party to leave us in peace, crushing us with insulting contempt. But suddenly, brought to the spot by the noise of a battle, Father Haugoult roughly intervened, inquiring as to the cause of the fight. Our enemies had interrupted us in writing our impositions, and the class-master came to protect his slaves. The foe, in self-defence, betrayed the existence of the manuscript. The dreadful Haugoult insisted on our giving up the box; if we should resist, he would have it broken open. Lambert gave him the key; the master took out the papers, glanced through them, and said, as he confiscated them:

"And it is for such rubbish as this that you neglect your lessons!"

Large tears fell from Lambert's eyes, wrung from him as much by a sense of his offended moral superiority as by the gratuitous insult and betrayal that he had suffered. We gave the accusers a glance of stern reproach: had they not delivered us over to the common enemy? If the common law of school entitled them to thrash us, did it not require them to keep silence as to our misdeeds?

In a moment they were no doubt ashamed of their baseness.

Father Haugoult probably sold the *Treatise on the Will* to a local grocer, unconscious of the scientific treasure, of which the germs thus fell into unworthy hands.

Six months later I left the school, and I do not know whether Lambert ever recommenced his labors. Our parting threw him into a mood of the darkest melancholy.

It was in memory of the disaster that befell Louis' book that, in the tale which comes first in these *Études,* I adopted the title invented by Lambert for a work of fiction, and gave the name of a woman who was dear to him to a girl charac-

terized by her self-devotion; but this is not all I have borrowed from him: his character and occupations were of great value to me in writing that book, and the subject arose from some reminiscences of our youthful meditations. This present volume is intended as a modest monument, a broken column, to commemorate the life of the man who bequeathed to me all he had to leave—his thoughts.

In that boyish effort Lambert had enshrined the ideas of a man. Ten years later, when I met some learned men who were devoting serious attention to the phenomena that had struck us and that Lambert had so marvelously analyzed, I understood the value of his work, then already forgotten as childish. I at once spent several months in recalling the principal theories discovered by my poor schoolmate. Having collected my reminiscences, I can boldly state that, by 1812, he had proved, divined, and set forth in his Treatise several important facts of which, as he had declared, evidence was certain to come sooner or later. His philosophical speculations ought undoubtedly to gain him recognition as one of the great thinkers who have appeared at wide intervals among men, to reveal to them the bare skeleton of some science to come, of which the roots spread slowly, but which, in due time, bring forth fair fruit in the intellectual sphere. Thus a humble artisan, Bernard Palissy, searching the soil to find minerals for glazing pottery, proclaimed, in the sixteenth century, with the infallible intuition of genius, geological facts which it is now the glory of Cuvier and Buffon to have demonstrated.

I can, I believe, give some idea of Lambert's Treatise by stating the chief propositions on which it was based; but, in spite of myself, I shall strip them of the ideas in which they were clothed, and which were indeed their indispensable accompaniment. I started on a different path, and only made use of those of his researches which answered the purpose of my scheme. I know not, therefore, whether as his disciple I can faithfully expound his views, having assimilated them in the first instance so as to color them with my own.

New ideas require new words, or a new and expanded use of old words, extended and defined in their meaning. Thus Lambert, to set forth the basis of his system, had adopted certain common words that answered to his notions. The word Will he used to connote the medium in which the mind moves, or to use a less abstract expression, the mass of power by which man can reproduce, outside himself, the actions constituting his external life. Volition—a word due to Locke—expressed the act by which a man exerts his will. The word Mind, or Thought, which he regarded as the quintessential product of the Will, also represented the medium in which the ideas originate to which thought gives substance. The Idea, a name common to every creation of the brain, constituted the act by which man uses his mind. Thus the Will and the Mind were the two generating forces; the Volition and the Idea were the two products. Volition, he thought, was the Idea evolved from the abstract state to a concrete state, from its generative fluid to a solid expression, so to speak, if such words may be taken to formulate notions so difficult of definition. According to him, the Mind and Ideas are the motion and the outcome of our inner organization, just as the Will and Volition are of our external activity.

He gave the Will precedence over the Mind.

"You must will before you can think," he said. "Many beings live in a condition of Willing without ever attaining to the condition of Thinking. In the North, life is long; in the South, it is shorter; but in the North we see torpor, in the South a constant excitability of the Will, up to the point where from an excess of cold or of heat the organs are almost nullified."

The use of the word "medium" was suggested to him by an observation he had made in his childhood, though, to be sure, he had no suspicion then of its importance, but its singularity naturally struck his delicately alert imagination. His mother, a fragile, nervous woman, all sensitiveness and affection, was one of those beings created to represent womanhood in all the perfection of her attributes, but relegated by a

mistaken fate to too low a place in the social scale. Wholly loving, and consequently wholly suffering, she died young, having thrown all her energies into her motherly love. Lambert, a child of six, lying, but not always sleeping, in a cot by his mother's bed, saw the electric sparks from her hair when she combed it. The man of fifteen made scientific application of this fact which had amused the child, a fact beyond dispute, of which there is ample evidence in many instances, especially of women who by a sad fatality are doomed to let unappreciated feelings evaporate in the air, or some superabundant power run to waste.

In support of his definitions, Lambert propounded a variety of problems to be solved, challenges flung out to science, though he proposed to seek the solution for himself. He inquired, for instance, whether the element that constitutes electricity does not enter as a base into the specific fluid whence our Ideas and Volitions proceed? Whether the hair, which loses its color, turns white, falls out, or disappears, in proportion to the decay or crystallization of our thoughts, may not be in fact a capillary system, either absorbent or diffusive, and wholly electrical? Whether the fluid phenomena of the Will, a matter generated within us, and spontaneously reacting under the impress of conditions as yet unobserved, were at all more extraordinary than those of the invisible and intangible fluid produced by a voltaic pile, and applied to the nervous system of a dead man? Whether the formation of Ideas and their constant diffusion was less incomprehensible than evaporation of the atoms, imperceptible indeed, but so violent in their effects, that are given off from a grain of musk without any loss of weight. Whether, granting that the function of the skin is purely protective, absorbent, excretive, and tactile, the circulation of the blood and all its mechanism would not correspond with the transubstantiation of our Will, as the circulation of the nerve fluid corresponds to that of the Mind? Finally, whether the more or less rapid affluence of these two real substances may not be the result of a certain perfection or imperfection

of organs whose conditions require investigation in every manifestation?

Having set forth these principles, he proposed to class the phenomena of human life in two series of distinct results, demanding, with the ardent insistency of conviction, a special analysis for each. In fact, having observed in almost every type of created thing two separate motions, he assumed, nay, he asserted, their existence in our human nature, and designated this vital antithesis Action and Reaction.

"A desire," he said, "is a fact completely accomplished in our will before it is accomplished externally."

Hence the sum-total of our Volitions and our Ideas constitutes Action, and the sum-total of our external acts he called Reaction.

When I subsequently read the observations made by Bichat on the duality of our external senses, I was really bewildered by my recollections, recognizing the startling coincidences between the views of that celebrated physiologist and those of Louis Lambert. They both died too young, and they had with equal steps arrived at the same strange truths. Nature has in every case been pleased to give a twofold purpose to the various apparatus that constitute her creatures; and the twofold action of the human organism, which is now ascertained beyond dispute, proves by a mass of evidence in daily life how true were Lambert's deductions as to Action and Reaction.

The inner Being, the Being of Action—the word he used to designate an unknown specialization—the mysterious nexus of fibrils to which we owe the inadequately investigated powers of thought and will—in short, the nameless entity which sees, acts, foresees the end, and accomplishes everything before expressing itself in any physical phenomenon—must, in conformity with its nature, be free from the physical conditions by which the external Being of Reaction, the visible man, is fettered in its manifestation. From this followed a multitude of logical explanation as to those results of our twofold nature which appear the strangest, and a

rectification of various systems in which truth and falsehood are mingled.

Certain men, having had a glimpse of some phenomena of the natural working of the Being of Action, were, like Swedenborg, carried away above this world by their ardent soul, thirsting for poetry, and filled with the Divine Spirit. Thus, in their ignorance of the causes and their admiration of the facts, they pleased their fancy by regarding that inner man as divine, and constructing a mystical universe. Hence we have angels! A lovely illusion which Lambert would never abandon, cherishing it even when the sword of his logic was cutting off their dazzling wings.

"Heaven," he would say, "must, after all, be the survival of our perfected faculties, and hell the void into which our unperfected faculties are cast away."

But how, then, in the ages when the understanding had preserved the religious and spiritualist impressions, which prevailed from the time of Christ till that of Descartes, between faith and doubt, how could men help accounting for the mysteries of our nature otherwise than by divine interposition? Of whom but of God Himself could sages demand an account of an invisible creature so actively and so reactively sensitive, gifted with faculties so extensive, so improvable by use, and so powerful under certain occult influences, that they could sometimes see it annihilate, by some phenomenon of sight or movement, space in its two manifestations—Time and Distance—of which the former is the space of the intellect, the latter is physical space? Sometimes they found it reconstructing the past, either by the power of retrospective vision, or by the mystery of a palingenesis not unlike the power a man might have of detecting in the form, integument, and embryo in a seed, the flowers of the past, and the numberless variations of their color, scent, and shape; and sometimes, again, it could be seen vaguely foreseeing the future, either by its apprehension of final causes, or by some phenomenon of physical presentiment.

Other men, less poetically religious, cold, and argumenta-

tive—quacks perhaps, but enthusiasts in brain at least, if not in heart—recognizing some isolated examples of such phenomena, admitted their truth while refusing to consider them as radiating from a common centre. Each of these was, then, bent on constructing a science out of a simple fact. Hence arose demonology, judicial astrology, the black arts, in short, every form of divination founded on circumstances that were essentially transient, because they varied according to men's temperament, and to conditions that are still completely unknown.

But from these errors of the learned, and from the ecclesiastical trials under which fell so many martyrs to their own powers, startling evidence was derived of the prodigious faculties at the command of the Being of Action, which, according to Lambert, can abstract itself completely from the Being of Reaction, bursting its envelope, and piercing walls by its potent vision; a phenomenon known to the Hindoos, as missionaries tell us, by the name of *Tokeiad;* or again, by another faculty, can grasp in the brain, in spite of its closest convolutions, the ideas which are formed or forming there, and the whole of past consciousness.

"If apparitions are not impossible," said Lambert, "they must be due to a faculty of discerning the ideas which represent man in his purest essence, whose life, imperishable perhaps, escapes our grosser senses, though they may become perceptible to the inner being when it has reached a high degree of ecstasy, or a great perfection of vision."

I know—though my remembrance is now vague—that Lambert, by following the results of Mind and Will step by step, after he had established their laws, accounted for a multitude of phenomena which, till then, had been regarded with reason as incomprehensible. Thus wizards, men possessed, those gifted with second sight, and demoniacs of every degree—the victims of the Middle Ages—became the subject of explanations so natural, that their very simplicity often seemed to me the seal of their truth. The marvelous gifts which the Church of Rome, jealous of all mysteries, pun-

ished with the stake, were, in Louis' opinion, the result of certain affinities between the constituent elements of matter and those of mind, which proceed from the same source. The man holding a hazel rod when he found a spring of water was guided by some antipathy or sympathy of which he was unconscious; nothing but the eccentricity of these phenomena could have availed to give some of them historic certainty.

Sympathies have rarely been proved; they afford a kind of pleasure which those who are so happy as to possess them rarely speak of unless they are abnormally singular, and even then only in the privacy of intimate intercourse, where everything is buried. But the antipathies that arise from the inversion of affinities have, very happily, been recorded when developed in famous men. Thus, Bayle had hysterics when he heard water splashing, Scaliger turned pale at the sight of water-cress, Erasmus was thrown into a fever by the smell of fish. These three antipathies were connected with water. The Duc d'Épernon fainted at the sight of a hare, Tycho-Brahe at that of a fox, Henri III. at the presence of a cat, the Maréchal d'Albret at the sight of a wild hog; these antipathies were produced by animal emanations, and often took effect at a great distance. The Chevalier de Guise, Marie de' Medici, and many other persons, have felt faint at seeing a rose even in a painting. Lord Bacon, whether he were forewarned or no of an eclipse of the moon, always fell into a syncope while it lasted; and his vitality, suspended while the phenomenon lasted, was restored as soon as it was over without his feeling any further inconvenience. These effects of antipathy, all well authenticated, and chosen from among many which history has happened to preserve, are enough to give a clue to the sympathies which remain unknown.

This fragment of Lambert's investigations, which I remember from among his essays, will throw a light on the method on which he worked. I need not emphasize the obvious connection between this theory and the collateral sciences projected by Gall and Lavater; they were its natural corollary;

and every more or less scientific brain will discern the ramifications by which it is inevitably connected with the phrenological observations of one and the speculations on physiognomy of the other.

Mesmer's discovery, so important, though as yet so little appreciated, was also embodied in a single section of this treatise, though Louis did not know the Swiss doctor's writings—which are few and brief.

A simple and logical inference from these principles led him to perceive that the will might be accumulated by a contractile effort of the inner man, and then, by another effort, projected, or even imparted, to material objects. Thus, the whole force of a man must have the property of reacting on other men, and of infusing into them an essence foreign to their own, if they could not protect themselves against such an aggression. The evidence of this theorem of the science of humanity is, of course, very multifarious; but there is nothing to establish it beyond question. We have only the notorious disaster of Marius and his harangue to the Cimbrian commanded to kill him, or the august injunction of a mother to the Lion of Florence, in historic proof of instances of such lightning flashes of mind. To Lambert, then, Will and Thought were *living forces;* and he spoke of them in such a way as to impress his belief on the hearer. To him these two forces were, in a way, visible, tangible. Thought was slow or alert, heavy or nimble, light or dark; he ascribed to it all the attributes of an active agent, and thought of it as rising, resting, waking, expanding, growing old, shrinking, becoming atrophied, or resuscitating; he described its life, and specified all its actions by the strangest words in our language, speaking of its spontaneity, its strength, and all its qualities with a kind of intuition which enabled him to recognize all the manifestations of its substantial existence

"Often," said he, "in the midst of quiet and silence, when our inner faculties are dormant, when we have given ourselves up to sweet repose, when a sort of darkness reigns within us, and we are lost in the contemplation of things outside us,

an idea suddenly flies forth, and rushes with the swiftness of lightning across the infinite space which our inner vision allows us to perceive. This radiant idea, springing into existence like a will-o'-the-wisp, dies out never to return; an ephemeral life, like that of babes who give their parents such infinite joy and sorrow; a sort of still-born blossom in the fields of the mind. Sometimes an idea, instead of springing forcibly into life and dying unembodied, dawns gradually hovers in the unknown limbo of the organs where it has its birth; exhausts us by long gestation, develops, is itself fruitful, grows outwardly in all the grace of youth and the promising attributes of a long life; it can endure the closest inspection, invites it, and never tires the sight; the investigation it undergoes commands the admiration we give to works slowly elaborated. Sometimes ideas are evolved in a swarm; one brings another; they come linked together; they vie with each other; they fly in clouds, wild and headlong. Again, they rise up pallid and misty, and perish for want of strength or of nutrition; the vital force is lacking. Or again, on certain days, they rush down into the depths to light up that immense obscurity; they terrify us and leave the soul dejected.

"Ideas are a complete system within us, resembling a natural kingdom, a sort of flora, of which the iconography will one day be outlined by some man who will perhaps be accounted a madman.

"Yes, within us and without, everything testifies to the livingness of those exquisite creations, which I compare with flowers in obedience to some unutterable revelation of their true nature!

"Their being produced as the final cause of man is, after all, not more amazing than the production of perfume and color in a plant. Perfumes *are* ideas, perhaps!

"When we consider that the line where flesh ends and the nail begins contains the invisible and inexplicable mystery of the constant transformation of a fluid into horn, we must confess that nothing is impossible in the marvelous modifications of human tissue.

"And are there not in our inner nature phenomena of weight and motion comparable to those of physical nature? Suspense, to choose an example vividly familiar to everybody, is painful only as a result of the law in virtue of which the weight of a body is multiplied by its velocity. The weight of the feeling produced by suspense increases by the constant addition of past pain to the pain of the moment.

"And then, to what, unless it be to the electric fluid, are we to attribute the magic by which the Will enthrones itself so imperiously in the eye to demolish obstacles at the behest of genius, thunders in the voice, or filters, in spite of dissimulation, through the human frame? The current of that sovereign fluid, which, in obedience to the high pressure of thought or of feeling, flows in a torrent or is reduced to a mere thread, and collects to flash in lightnings, is the occult agent to which are due the evil or the beneficent efforts of Art and Passion—intonation of voice, whether harsh or suave, terrible, lascivious, horrifying or seductive by turns, thrilling the heart, the nerves, or the brain at our will; the marvels of the touch, the instrument of the mental transfusions of a myriad artists, whose creative fingers are able, after passionate study, to reproduce the forms of nature; or, again, the infinite gradations of the eye from dull inertia to the emission of the most terrifying gleams.

"By this system God is bereft of none of His rights. Mind, as a form of matter, has brought me a new conviction of His greatness."

After hearing him discourse thus, after receiving into my soul his look like a ray of light, it was difficult not to be dazzled by his conviction and carried away by his arguments. The Mind appeared to me as a purely physical power, surrounded by its innumerable progeny. It was a new conception of humanity under a new form.

This brief sketch of the laws which, as Lambert maintained, constitute the formula of our intellect, must suffice to give a notion of the prodigious activity of his spirit feeding on itself. Louis had sought for proofs of his theories in

the history of great men, whose lives, as set forth by their biographers, supply very curious particulars as to the operation of their understanding. His memory allowed him to recall such facts as might serve to support his statements; he had appended them to each chapter in the form of demonstrations, so as to give to many of his theories an almost mathematical certainty. The works of Cardan, a man gifted with singular powers of insight, supplied him with valuable materials. He had not forgotten that Apollonius of Tyana had, in Asia, announced the death of the tyrant with every detail of his execution, at the very hour when it was taking place in Rome; nor that Plotinus, when far away from Porphyrius, was aware of his friend's intention to kill himself, and flew to dissuade him; nor the incident in the last century, proved in the face of the most incredulous mockery ever known—an incident most surprising to men who were accustomed to regard doubt as a weapon against the fact alone, but simple enough to believers—the fact that Alphonzo-Maria di Liguori, Bishop of Saint-Agatha, administered consolations to Pope Ganganelli, who saw him, heard him, and answered him, while the Bishop himself, at a great distance from Rome, was in a trance at home, in the chair where he commonly sat on his return from Mass. On recovering consciousness, he saw all his attendants kneeling beside him, believing him to be dead: "My friends," said he, "the Holy Father is just dead." Two days later a letter confirmed the news. The hour of the Pope's death coincided with that when the Bishop had been restored to his natural state.

Nor had Lambert omitted the yet more recent adventure of an English girl who was passionately attached to a sailor, and set out from London to seek him. She found him, without a guide, making her way alone in the North American wilderness, reaching him just in time to save his life.

Louis had found confirmatory evidence in the mysteries of the ancients, in the acts of the martyrs—in which glorious instances may be found of the triumph of human will, in the demonology of the Middle Ages, in criminal trials and

medical researches; always selecting the real fact, the probable phenomenon, with admirable sagacity.

All this rich collection of scientific anecdotes, culled from so many books, most of them worthy of credit, served no doubt to wrap parcels in; and this work, which was curious, to say the least of it, as the outcome of a most extraordinary memory, was doomed to destruction.

Among the various cases which added to the value of Lambert's *Treatise* was an incident that had taken place in his own family, of which he had told me before he wrote his essay This fact, bearing on the post-existence of the inner man, if I may be allowed to coin a new word for a phenomenon hitherto nameless, struck me so forcibly that I have never forgotten it. His father and mother were being forced into a lawsuit, of which the loss would leave them with a stain on their good name, the only thing they had in the world. Hence their anxiety was very great when the question first arose as to whether they should yield to the plaintiff's unjust demands, or should defend themselves against him. The matter came under discussion one autumn evening, before a turf fire in the room used by the tanner and his wife. Two or three relations were invited to this family council, and among others Louis' maternal great-grandfather, an old laborer, much bent, but with a venerable and dignified countenance, bright eyes, and a bald, yellow head, on which grew a few locks of thin, white hair. Like the Obi of the Negroes, or the Sagamore of the Indian savage, he was a sort of oracle, consulted on important occasions. His land was tilled by his grandchildren, who fed and served him; he predicted rain and fine weather, and told them when to mow the hay and gather the crops. The barometric exactitude of his forecasts was quite famous, and added to the confidence and respect he inspired. For whole days he would sit immovable in his armchair. This state of rapt meditation often came upon him since his wife's death; he had been attached to her with the truest and most faithful affection.

This discussion was held in his presence, but he did not seem to give much heed to it.

"My children," said he, when he was asked for his opinion, "this is too serious a matter for me to decide on alone. I must go and consult my wife."

The old man rose, took his stick, and went out, to the great astonishment of the others, who thought him daft. He presently came back and said:

"I did not have to go so far as the graveyard; your mother came to meet me; I found her by the brook. She tells me that you will find some receipts in the hands of a notary at Blois, which will enable you to gain your suit."

The words were spoken in a firm tone; the old man's demeanor and countenance showed that such an apparition was habitual with him. In fact, the disputed receipts were found, and the lawsuit was not attempted.

This event, under his father's roof and to his own knowledge, when Louis was nine years old, contributed largely to his belief in Swedenborg's miraculous visions, for in the course of that philosopher's life he repeatedly gave proof of the power of sight developed in his Inner Being. As he grew older, and as his intelligence was developed, Lambert was naturally led to seek in the laws of nature for the causes of the miracle which, in his childhood, had captivated his attention. What name can be given to the chance which brought within his ken so many facts and books bearing on such phenomena, and made him the principal subject and actor in such marvelous manifestations of mind?

If Lambert had no other title to fame than the fact of his having formulated, in his sixteenth year, such a psychological dictum as this:—"The events which bear witness to the action of the human race, and are the outcome of its intellect, have causes by which they are preconceived, as our actions are accomplished in our mind before they are reproduced by the outer man; presentiments or predictions are the perception of these causes"—I think we may deplore in him a genius equal to Pascal, Lavoisier, or Laplace. His chimerical notions about angels perhaps overruled his work too long; but was it not in trying to make gold that the alchemists uncon-

seriously created chemistry? At the same time, Lambert, at a later period, studied comparative anatomy, physics, geometry, and other sciences bearing on his discoveries, and this was undoubtedly with the purpose of collecting facts and submitting them to analysis—the only torch that can guide us through the dark places of the most inscrutable work of nature. He had too much good sense to dwell among the clouds of theories which can all be expressed in a few words. In our day, is not the simplest demonstration based on facts more highly esteemed than the most specious system though defended by more or less ingenious inductions? But as I did not know him at the period of his life when his cogitations were, no doubt, the most productive of results, I can only conjecture what the bent of his work must have been from that of his first efforts of thought.

It is easy to see where his *Treatise on the Will* was faulty. Though gifted already with the powers which characterize superior men, he was but a boy. His brain, though endowed with a great faculty for abstractions, was still full of the delightful beliefs that hover around youth. Thus his conception, while at some points it touched the ripest fruits of his genius, still, by many more, clung to the smaller elements of its germs. To certain readers, lovers of poetry, what he chiefly lacked must have been a certain vein of interest.

But his work bore the stamp of the struggle that was going on in that noble Spirit between the two great principles of Spiritualism and Materialism, round which so many a fine genius has beaten its way without ever daring to amalgamate them. Louis, at first purely Spiritualist, had been irresistibly led to recognize the Material conditions of Mind. Confounded by the facts of analysis at the moment when his heart still gazed with yearning at the clouds that floated in Swedenborg's heaven, he had not yet acquired the necessary powers to produce a coherent system, compactly cast in a piece, as it were. Hence certain inconsistencies that have left their stamp even on the sketch here given of his first attempts. Still, incomplete as his work may have been, was

it not the rough copy of a science of which he would have investigated the secrets at a later time, have secured the foundations, have examined, deduced, and connected the logical sequence?

Six months after the confiscation of the *Treatise on the Will* I left school. Our parting was unexpected. My mother, alarmed by a feverish attack which for some months I had been unable to shake off, while my inactive life induced symptoms of *coma,* carried me off at four or five hours' notice. The announcement of my departure reduced Lambert to dreadful dejection.

"Shall I ever see you again?" said he in his gentle voice, as he clasped me in his arms. "You will live," he went on, "but I shall die. If I can, I will come back to you."

Only the young can utter such words with the accent of conviction that gives them the impressiveness of prophecy, of a pledge, leaving a terror of its fulfilment. For a long time indeed I vaguely looked for the promised apparition. Even now there are days of depression, of doubt, alarm, and loneliness, when I am forced to repel the intrusion of that sad parting, though it was not fated to be the last.

When I crossed the yard by which we left, Lambert was at one of the refectory windows to see me pass. By my request my mother obtained leave for him to dine with us at the inn, and in the evening I escorted him back to the fatal gate of the college. No lover and his mistress ever shed more tears at parting.

"Well, good-bye; I shall be left alone in this desert!" said he, pointing to the playground where two hundred boys were disporting themselves and shouting. "When I come back half dead with fatigue from my long excursions through the fields of thought, on whose heart can I rest? I could tell you everything in a look. Who will understand me now?—Good-bye! I could wish I had never met you; I should not know all I am losing."

"And what is to become of me?" said I. "Is not my posi-

tion a dreadful one. *I* have nothing here to uphold me!" and I slapped my forehead.

He shook his head with a gentle gesture, gracious and sad, and we parted.

At that time Louis Lambert was about five feet five inches in height; he grew no more. His countenance, which was full of expression, revealed his sweet nature. Divine patience, developed by harsh usage, and the constant concentration needed for his meditative life, had bereft his eyes of the audacious pride which is so attractive in some faces, and which had so shocked our masters. Peaceful mildness gave charm to his face, an exquisite serenity that was never marred by a tinge of irony or satire; for his natural kindliness tempered his conscious strength and superiority. He had pretty hands, very slender, and almost always moist. His frame was a marvel, a model for a sculptor; but our iron-gray uniform, with gilt buttons and knee-breeches, gave us such an ungainly appearance that Lambert's fine proportions and firm muscles could only be appreciated in the bath. When we swam in our pool in the Loir, Louis was conspicuous by the whiteness of his skin, which was unlike the different shades of our schoolfellows' bodies mottled by the cold, or blue from the water. Gracefully formed, elegant in his attitudes, delicate in hue, never shivering after his bath, perhaps because he avoided the shade and always ran into the sunshine, Louis was like one of those cautious blossoms that close their petals to the blast and refuse to open unless to a clear sky. He ate little, and drank water only; either by instinct or by choice he was averse to any exertion that made a demand on his strength; his movements were few and simple, like those of Orientals or of savages, with whom gravity seems a condition of nature.

As a rule, he disliked everything that resembled any special care for his person. He commonly sat with his head a little inclined to the left, and so constantly rested his elbows on the table, that the sleeves of his coats were soon in holes.

To this slight picture of the outer man I must add a sketch

of his moral qualities, for I believe I can now judge him impartially.

Though naturally religious, Louis did not accept the minute practices of the Roman ritual; his ideas were more intimately in sympathy with Saint Theresa and Fénelon, and several Fathers and certain Saints, who, in our day, would be regarded as heresiarchs or atheists. He was rigidly calm during the services. His own prayers went up in gusts, in aspirations, without any regular formality; in all things he gave himself up to nature, and would not pray, any more than he would think, at any fixed hour. In chapel he was equally apt to think of God or to meditate on some problem of philosophy.

To him Jesus Christ was the most perfect type of his system. *Et Verbum caro factum est* seemed a sublime statement intended to express the traditional formula of the Will, the Word, and the Act made visible. Christ's unconsciousness of His Death—having so perfected His inner Being by divine works, that one day the invisible form of it appeared to His disciples—and the other Mysteries of the Gospels, the magnetic cures wrought by Christ, and the gift of tongues, all to him confirmed his doctrine. I remember once hearing him say on this subject, that the greatest work that could be written nowadays was a History of the Primitive Church. And he never rose to such poetic heights as when, in the evening, as we conversed, he would enter on an inquiry into miracles, worked by the power of Will during that great age of faith. He discerned the strongest evidence of his theory in most of the martyrdoms endured during the first century of our era, which he spoke of as *the great era of the Mind.*

"Do not the phenomena observed in almost every instance of the torments so heroically endured by the early Christians for the establishment of the faith, amply prove that Material force will never prevail against the force of Ideas or the Will of man?" he would say. "From this effect, produced by the Will of all, each man may draw conclusions in favor of his own."

I need say nothing of his views on poetry or history, nor of his judgment on the masterpieces of our language. There would be little interest in the record of opinions now almost universally held, though at that time, from the lips of a boy, they might seem remarkable. Louis was capable of the highest flights. To give a notion of his talents in two words, he could have written *Zadig* as wittily as Voltaire, he could have thought out the Dialogue between Sylla and Eucrates as powerfully as Montesquieu. His rectitude of character made him desire above all else in a work that it should bear the stamp of utility; at the same time, his refined taste demanded novelty of thought as well as of form. One of his most remarkable literary observations, which will serve as a clue to all the others, and show the lucidity of his judgment, is this, which has ever dwelt in my memory, "The Apocalypse is written ecstasy." He regarded the Bible as a part of the traditional history of the antediluvian nations which had taken for its share the new humanity. He thought that the mythology of the Greeks was borrowed both from the Hebrew Scriptures and from the sacred Books of India, adapted after their own fashion by the beauty-loving Hellenes.

"It is impossible," said he, "to doubt the priority of the Asiatic Scriptures; they are earlier than our sacred books. The man who is candid enough to admit this historical fact sees the whole world expand before him. Was it not on the Asiatic highland that the few men took refuge who were able to escape the catastrophe that ruined our globe—if, indeed, men had existed before that cataclysm or shock? A serious query, the answer to which lies at the bottom of the sea. The anthropogony of the Bible is merely a genealogy of a swarm escaping from the human hive which settled on the mountainous slopes of Thibet between the summits of the Himalaya and the Caucasus.

"The character of the primitive ideas of that horde called by its lawgiver the people of God, no doubt to secure its unity, and perhaps also to induce it to maintain his laws and his system of government—for the Books of Moses are a re-

ligious, political, and civil code—that character bears the authority of terror; convulsions of nature are interpreted with stupendous power as a vengeance from on high. In fact, since this wandering tribe knew none of the ease enjoyed by a community settled in a patriarchal home, their sorrows as pilgrims inspired them with none but gloomy poems, majestic but blood-stained. In the Hindoos, on the contrary, the spectacle of the rapid recoveries of the natural world, and the prodigious effects of sunshine, which they were the first to recognize, gave rise to happy images of blissful love, to the worship of Fire and of the endless personifications of reproductive force. These fine fancies are lacking in the Book of the Hebrews. A constant need of self-preservation amid all the dangers and the lands they traversed to reach the Promised Land engendered their exclusive race-feeling and their hatred of all other nations.

"These three Scriptures are the archives of an engulfed world. Therein lies the secret of the extraordinary splendor of those languages and their myths. A grand human history lies beneath those names of men and places, and those fables which charm us so irresistibly, we know not why. Perhaps it is because we find in them the native air of renewed humanity."

Thus, to him, this threefold literature included all the thoughts of man. Not a book could be written, in his opinion, of which the subject might not there be discerned in its germ. This view shows how learnedly he had pursued his early studies of the Bible, and how far they had led him. Hovering, as it were, over the heads of society, and knowing it solely from books, he could judge it coldly.

"The law," said he, "never puts a check on the enterprises of the rich and great, but crushes the poor, who, on the contrary, need protection."

His kind heart did not therefore allow him to sympathize in political ideas; his system led rather to the passive obedience of which Jesus set the example. During the last hours of my life at Vendôme, Louis had ceased to feel the spur to

glory; he had, in a way, had an abstract enjoyment of fame; and having opened it, as the ancient priests of sacrifice sought to read the future in the hearts of men, he had found nothing in the entrails of his chimera. Scorning a sentiment so wholly personal: "Glory," said he, "is but beatified egoism."

Here, perhaps, before taking leave of this exceptional boyhood, I may pronounce judgment on it by a rapid glance.

A short time before our separation, Lambert said to me:

"Apart from the general laws which I have formulated—and this, perhaps, will be my glory—laws which must be those of the human organism, the life of man is Movement determined in each individual by the pressure of some inscrutable influence—by the brain, the heart, or the sinews. All the innumerable modes of human existence result from the proportions in which these three generating forces are more or less intimately combined with the substances they assimilate in the environment they live in."

He stopped short, struck his forehead, and exclaimed: "How strange! In every great man whose portrait I have remarked, the neck is short. Perhaps nature requires that in them the heart should be nearer to the brain!"

Then he went on:

"From that, a sum-total of action takes its rise which constitutes social life. The man of sinew contributes action or strength; the man of brain, genius; the man of heart, faith. But," he added sadly, "faith sees only the clouds of the sanctuary; the Angel alone has light."

So, according to his own definitions, Lambert was all brain and all heart. It seems to me that his intellectual life was divided into three marked phases.

Under the impulsion, from his earliest years, of a precocious activity, due, no doubt, to some malady—or to some special perfection—of organism, his powers were concentrated on the functions of the inner senses and a superabundant flow of nerve-fluid. As a man of ideas, he craved to satisfy the thirst of his brain, to assimilate every idea. Hence his reading; and from his reading, the reflections that

gave him the power of reducing things to their simplest expression, and of absorbing them to study them in their essence. Thus, the advantages of this splendid stage, acquired by other men only after long study, were achieved by Lambert during his bodily childhood: a happy childhood, colored by the studious joys of a born poet.

The point which most thinkers reach at last was to him the starting-point, whence his brain was to set out one day in search of new worlds of knowledge. Though as yet he knew it not, he had made for himself the most exacting life possible, and the most insatiably greedy. Merely to live, was he not compelled to be perpetually casting nutriment into the gulf he had opened in himself? Like some beings who dwell in the grosser world, might he not die of inanition for want of feeding abnormal and disappointed cravings? Was not this a sort of debauchery of the intellect which might lead to spontaneous combustion, like that of bodies saturated with alcohol?

I had seen nothing of this first phase of his brain-development; it is only now, at a later day, that I can thus give an account of its prodigious fruit and results. Lambert was now thirteen.

I was so fortunate as to witness the first stage of the second period. Lambert was cast into all the miseries of school-life—and that, perhaps, was his salvation—it absorbed the superabundance of his thoughts. After passing from concrete ideas to their purest expression, from words to their ideal import, and from that import to principles, after reducing everything to the abstract, to enable him to live he yearned for yet other intellectual creations. Quelled by the woes of school and the critical development of his physical constitution, he became thoughtful, dreamed of feeling, and caught a glimpse of new sciences—positively masses of ideas. Checked in his career, and not yet strong enough to contemplate the higher spheres, he contemplated his inmost self. I then perceived in him the struggle of the Mind reacting on itself, and trying to detect the secrets of its own nature, like a physician who watches the course of his own disease.

At this stage of weakness and strength, of childish grace and superhuman powers, Louis Lambert is the creature who, more than any other, gave me a poetical and truthful image of the being we call an angel, always excepting one woman whose name, whose features, whose identity, and whose life I would fain hide from all the world, so as to be sole master of the secret of her existence, and to bury it in the depths of my heart.

The third phase I was not destined to see. It began when Lambert and I were parted, for he did not leave college till he was eighteen, in the summer of 1815. He had at that time lost his father and mother about six months before. Finding no member of his family with whom his soul could sympathize, expansive still, but, since our parting, thrown back on himself, he made his home with his uncle, who was also his guardian, and who, having been turned out of his benefice as a priest who had taken the oaths, had come to settle at Blois. There Louis lived for some time; but consumed ere long by the desire to finish his incomplete studies, he came to Paris to see Madame de Staël, and to drink of science at its highest fount. The old priest, being very fond of his nephew, left Louis free to spend his whole little inheritance in his three years' stay in Paris, though he lived very poorly. This fortune consisted of but a few thousand francs.

Lambert returned to Blois at the beginning of 1820, driven from Paris by the sufferings to which the impecunious are exposed there. He must often have been a victim to the secret storms, the terrible rage of mind by which artists are tossed to judge from the only fact his uncle recollected, and the only letter he preserved of all those which Louis Lambert wrote to him at that time, perhaps because it was the last and the longest.

To begin with the story. Louis one evening was at the Théâtre-Français, seated on a bench in the upper gallery, near to one of the pillars which, in those days, divided off the third row of boxes. On rising between the acts, he saw

a young woman who had just come into the box next him. The sight of this lady, who was young, pretty, well dressed, in a low bodice no doubt, and escorted by a man for whom her face beamed with all the charms of love, produced such a terrible effect on Lambert's soul and senses, that he was obliged to leave the theatre. If he had not been controlled by some remaining glimmer of reason, which was not wholly extinguished by this first fever of burning passion, he might perhaps have yielded to the almost irresistible desire that came over him to kill the young man on whom the lady's looks beamed. Was not this a reversion, in the heart of the Paris world, to the savage passion that regards women as its prey, an effect of animal instinct combining with the almost luminous flashes of a soul crushed under the weight of thought? In short, was it not the prick of the penknife so vividly imagined by the boy, felt by the man as the thunderbolt of his most vital craving—for love?

And now, here is the letter that depicts the state of his mind as it was struck by the spectacle of Parisian civilization. His feelings, perpetually wounded no doubt in that whirlpool of self-interest, must always have suffered there; he probably had no friend to comfort him, no enemy to give tone to his life. Compelled to live in himself alone, having no one to share his subtle raptures, he may have hoped to solve the problem of his destiny by a life of ecstasy, adopting an almost vegetative attitude, like an anchorite of the early Church, and abdicating the empire of the intellectual world.

This letter seems to hint at such a scheme, which is a temptation to all lofty souls at periods of social reform. But is not this purpose, in some cases, the result of a vocation? Do not some of them endeavor to concentrate their powers by long silence, so as to emerge fully capable of governing the world by word or by deed? Louis must, assuredly, have found much bitterness in his intercourse with men, or have striven hard with Society in terrible irony, without extracting anything from it, before uttering so strident a cry, and expressing, poor fellow, the desire which satiety of

power and of all earthly things has led even monarchs to indulge!

And perhaps, too, he went back to solitude to carry out some great work that was floating inchoate in his brain. We would gladly believe it as we read this fragment of his thoughts, betraying the struggle of his soul at the time when youth was ending and the terrible power of production was coming into being, to which we might have owed the works of the man.

This letter connects itself with the adventure at the theatre. The incident and the letter throw light on each other, body and soul were tuned to the same pitch. This tempest of doubts and asseverations, of clouds and of lightnings that flash before the thunder, ending by a starved yearning for heavenly illumination, throws such a light on the third phase of his education as enables us to understand it perfectly. As we read these lines, written at chance moments, taken up when the vicissitudes of life in Paris allowed, may we not fancy that we see an oak at that stage of its growth when its inner expansion bursts the tender green bark, covering it with wrinkles and cracks, when its majestic stature is in preparation—if indeed the lightnings of heaven and the axe of man shall spare it?

This letter, then, will close, alike for the poet and the philosopher, this portentous childhood and unappreciated youth. It finishes off the outline of this nature in its germ. Philosophers will regret the foliage frost-nipped in the bud; but they will, perhaps, find the flowers expanding in regions far above the highest places of the earth.

"PARIS, *September-October* 1819.

"DEAR UNCLE,—I shall soon be leaving this part of the world, where I could never bear to live. I find no one here who likes what I like, who works at my work, or is amazed at what amazes me. Thrown back on myself, I eat my heart out in misery. My long and patient study of Society here has brought me to melancholy conclusions, in which doubt predominates.

"Here, money is the mainspring of everything. Money is indispensable, even for going without money. But though that dross is necessary to any one who wishes to think in peace, I have not courage enough to make it the sole motive power of my thoughts. To make a fortune, I must take up a profession; in two words, I must, by acquiring some privilege of position or of self-advertisement, either legal or ingeniously contrived, purchase the right of taking day by day out of somebody else's purse a certain sum which, by the end of the year, would amount to a small capital; and this, in twenty years, would hardly secure an income of four or five thousand francs to a man who deals honestly. An advocate, a notary, a merchant, any recognized professional, has earned a living for his later days in the course of fifteen or sixteen years after ending his apprenticeship.

"But I have never felt fit for work of this kind. I prefer thought to action, an idea to a transaction, contemplation to activity. I am absolutely devoid of the constant attention indispensable to the making of a fortune. Any mercantile venture, any need for using other people's money would bring me to grief, and I should be ruined. Though I have nothing, at least at the moment, I owe nothing. The man who gives his life to the achievement of great things in the sphere of intellect, needs very little; still, though twenty sous a day would be enough, I do not possess that small income for my laborious idleness. When I wish to cogitate, want drives me out of the sanctuary where my mind has its being. What is to become of me?

"I am not frightened at poverty. If it were not that beggars are imprisoned, branded, scorned, I would beg, to enable me to solve at my leisure the problems that haunt me. Still, this sublime resignation, by which I might emancipate my mind, through abstracting it from the body, would not serve my end. I should still need money to devote myself to certain experiments. But for that, I would accept the outward indigence of a sage possessed of both heaven and earth. A man need only never stoop, to remain lofty in poverty. He who

struggles and endures, while marching on to a glorious end, presents a noble spectacle; but who can have the strength to fight here? We can climb cliffs, but it is unendurable to remain for ever tramping the mud. Everything here checks the flight of a spirit that strives towards the future.

"I should not be afraid of myself in a desert cave; I am afraid of myself here. In the desert I should be alone with myself, undisturbed; here man has a thousand wants which drag him down. You go out walking, absorbed in dreams; the voice of the beggar asking an alms brings you back to this world of hunger and thirst. You need money only to take a walk. Your organs of sense, perpetually wearied by trifles, never get any rest. The poet's sensitive nerves are perpetually shocked, and what ought to be his glory becomes his torment; his imagination is his cruelest enemy. The injured workman, the poor mother in childbed, the prostitute who has fallen ill, the foundling, the infirm and aged—even vice and crime here find a refuge and charity; but the world is merciless to the inventor, to the man who thinks. Here everything must show an immediate and practical result. Fruitless attempts are mocked at, though they may lead to the greatest discoveries; the deep and untiring study that demands long concentration of every faculty is not valued here. The State might pay talent as it pays the bayonet; but it is afraid of being taken in by mere cleverness, as if genius could be counterfeited for any length of time.

"Ah, my dear uncle, when monastic solitude was destroyed, uprooted from its home at the foot of mountains, under green and silent shade, asylums ought to have been provided for those suffering souls who, by an idea, promote the progress of nations or prepare some new and fruitful development of science.

"*September 20th.*

"The love of study brought me hither, as you know. I have met really learned men, amazing for the most part; but the lack of unity in scientific work almost nullifies their

efforts. There is no Head of instruction or of scientific research. At the Museum a professor argues to prove that another in the Rue Saint-Jacques talks nonsense. The lecturer at the College of Medicine abuses him of the Collège de France. When I first arrived, I went to hear an old Academician who taught five hundred youths that Corneille was a haughty and powerful genius; Racine, elegiac and graceful; Molière, inimitable; Voltaire, supremely witty; Bossuet and Pascal, incomparable in argument. A professor of philosophy may make a name by explaining how Plato is Platonic. Another discourses on the history of words, without troubling himself about ideas. One explains Æschylus, another tells you that communes were communes, and neither more nor less. These original and brilliant discoveries, diluted to last several hours, constitute the higher education which is to lead to giant strides in human knowledge.

"If the Government could have an idea, I should suspect it of being afraid of any real superiority, which, once roused, might bring Society under the yoke of an intelligent rule. Then nations would go too far and too fast; so professors are appointed to produce simpletons. How else can we account for a scheme devoid of method or any notion of the future?

"The *Institut* might be the central government of the moral and intellectual world; but it has been ruined lately by its subdivision into separate academies. So human science marches on, without a guide, without a system, and floats haphazard with no road traced out.

"This vagueness and uncertainty prevails in politics as well as in science. In the order of nature means are simple, the end is grand and marvelous; here in science, as in government, the means are stupendous, the end is mean. The force which in nature proceeds at an equal pace, and of which the sum is constantly being added to itself—the A+A from which everything is produced—is destructive in society. Politics, at the present time, place human forces in antago-

nism to neutralize each other, instead of combining them to promote their action to some definite end.

"Looking at Europe alone, from Cæsar to Constantine, from the puny Constantine to the great Attila, from the Huns to Charlemagne, from Charlemagne to Leo X., from Leo X. to Philip II., from Philip II. to Louis XIV.; from Venice to England, from England to Napoleon, from Napoleon to England, I see no fixed purpose in politics; its constant agitation has led to no progress.

"Nations leave witnesses to their greatness in monuments, and to their happiness in the welfare of individuals. Are modern monuments as fine as those of the ancients? I doubt it. The arts, which are the direct outcome of the individual, the products of genius or of handicraft, have not advanced much. The pleasures of Lucullus were as good as those of Samuel Bernard, of Beaujon, or of the King of Bavaria. And then human longevity has diminished.

"Thus, to those who will be candid, man is still the same; might is his only law, and success his only wisdom.

"Jesus Christ, Mahomet, and Luther only lent a different hue to the arena in which youthful nations disport themselves.

"No development of politics has hindered civilization, with its riches, its manners, its alliance of the strong against the weak, its ideas, and its delights, from moving from Memphis to Tyre, from Tyre to Baalbek, from Tadmor to Carthage, from Carthage to Rome, from Rome to Constantinople, from Constantinople to Venice, from Venice to Spain, from Spain to England—while no trace is left of Memphis, of Tyre, of Carthage, of Rome, of Venice, or Madrid. The soul of those great bodies has fled. Not one of them has preserved itself from destruction, nor formulated this axiom: When the effect produced ceases to be in a ratio to its cause, disorganization follows.

"The most subtle genius can discover no common bond between great social facts. No political theory has ever lasted. Governments pass away, as men do, without handing down

any lesson, and no system gives birth to a system better than that which came before it. What can we say about politics when a Government directly referred to God perished in India and Egypt; when the rule of the Sword and of the Tiara are past; when Monarchy is dying; when the Government of the People has never been alive; when no scheme of intellectual power as applied to material interests has ever proved durable, and everything at this day remains to be done all over again, as it has been at every period when man has turned to cry out, 'I am in torment!'

"The code, which is considered Napoleon's greatest achievement, is the most Draconian work I know of. Territorial subdivision carried out to the uttermost, and its principle confirmed by the equal division of property generally, must result in the degeneracy of the nation and the death of the Arts and Sciences. The land, too much broken up, is cultivated only with cereals and small crops; the forests, and consequently the rivers, are disappearing; oxen and horses are no longer bred. Means are lacking both for attack and for resistance. If we should be invaded, the people must be crushed; it has lost its mainspring—its leaders. This is the history of deserts!

"Thus the science of politics has no definite principles, and it can have no fixity; it is the spirit of the hour, the perpetual application of strength proportioned to the necessities of the moment. The man who should foresee two centuries ahead would die on the place of execution, loaded with the imprecations of the mob, or else—which seems worse—would be lashed with the myriad whips of ridicule. Nations are but individuals, neither wiser nor stronger than man, and their destinies are identical. If we reflect on man, is not that to consider mankind?

"By studying the spectacle of society perpetually storm-tossed in its foundations as well as in its results, in its causes as well as in its actions, while philanthropy is but a splendid mistake, and progress is vanity, I have been confirmed in this truth: Life is within and not without us; to rise above

men, to govern them, is only the part of an aggrandized schoolmaster; and those men who are capable of rising to the level whence they can enjoy a view of the world should not look at their own feet.

"*November 4th.*

"I am no doubt occupied with weighty thoughts, I am on the way to certain discoveries, an invincible power bears me toward a luminary which shone at an early age on the darkness of my moral life; but what name can I give to the power that ties my hands and shuts my mouth, and drags me in a direction opposite to my vocation? I must leave Paris, bid farewell to the books in the libraries, those noble centres of illumination, those kindly and always accessible sages, and the younger geniuses with whom I sympathize. Who is it that drives me away? Chance or Providence?

"The two ideas represented by those words are irreconcilable. If Chance does not exist, we must admit fatalism, that is to say, the compulsory co-ordination of things under the rule of a general plan. Why then do we rebel? If man is not free, what becomes of the scaffolding of his moral sense? Or, if he can control his destiny, if by his own free will he can interfere with the execution of the general plan, what becomes of God?

"Why did I come here? If I examine myself, I find the answer: I find in myself axioms that need developing. But why then have I such vast faculties without being suffered to use them? If my suffering could serve as an example, I could understand it; but no, I suffer unknown.

"This is perhaps as much the act of Providence as the fate of the flower that dies unseen in the heart of the virgin forest, where no one can enjoy its perfume or admire its splendor. Just as that blossom vainly sheds its fragrance to the solitude, so do I, here in a garret, give birth to ideas that no one can grasp.

"Yesterday evening I sat eating bread and grapes in front of my window with a young doctor named Meyraux. We

talked as men do whom misfortune has joined in brotherhood, and I said to him:

"'I am going away; you are staying. Take up my ideas and develop them.'

"'I cannot!' said he, with bitter regret; 'my feeble health cannot stand so much work, and I shall die young of my struggle with penury.'

"We looked up at the sky and grasped hands. We first met at the Comparative Anatomy course, and in the galleries of the Museum, attracted thither by the same study—the unity of geological structure. In him this was the presentiment of genius sent to open a new path in the fallows of intellect; in me it was a deduction from a general system.

"My point is to ascertain the real relation that may exist between God and man. Is not this a need of the age? Without the highest assurance, it is impossible to put bit and bridle on the social factions that have been let loose by the spirit of scepticism and discussion, and which are now crying aloud: 'Show us a way in which we may walk and find no pitfalls in our way!'

"You will wonder what comparative anatomy has to do with a question of such importance to the future of society. Must we not attain to the conviction that man is the end of all earthly means before we ask whether he too is not the means to some end? If man is bound up with everything, is there not something above him with which he again is bound up? If he is the end-all of the unexplained transmutations that lead up to him, must he not be also the link between the visible and invisible creations?

"The activity of the universe is not absurd; it must tend to an end, and that end is surely not a social body constituted as ours is! There is a fearful gulf between us and heaven. In our present existence we can neither be always happy nor always in torment; must there not be some tremendous change to bring about Paradise and Hell, two images without which God cannot exist to the mind of the vulgar? I know that a compromise was made by the invention of the Soul;

but it is repugnant to me to make God answerable for human baseness, for our disenchantments, our aversions, our degeneracy.

"Again, how can we recognize as divine the principle within us which can be overthrown by a few glasses of rum? How conceive of immaterial faculties which matter can conquer, and whose exercise is suspended by a grain of opium? How imagine that we shall be able to feel when we are bereft of the vehicles of sensation? Why must God perish if matter can be proved to think? Is the vitality of matter in its innumerable manifestations—the effect of its instincts—at all more explicable than the effects of the mind? Is not the motion given to the worlds enough to prove God's existence, without our plunging into absurd speculations suggested by pride? And if we pass, after our trials, from a perishable state of being to a higher existence, is not that enough for a creature that is distinguished from other creatures only by more perfect instincts? If in moral philosophy there is not a single principle which does not lead to the absurd, or cannot be disproved by evidence, is it not high time that we should set to work to seek such dogmas as are written in the innermost nature of things? Must we not reverse philosophical science?

"We trouble ourselves very little about the supposed void that must have pre-existed for us, and we try to fathom the supposed void that lies before us. We make God responsible for the future, but we do not expect Him to account for the past. And yet it is quite as desirable to know whether we have any roots in the past as to discover whether we are inseparable from the future.

"We have been Deists or Atheists in one direction only.

"Is the world eternal? Was the world created? We can conceive of no middle term between these two propositions; one, then, is true and the other false! Take your choice. Whichever it may be, God, as our reason depicts Him, must be deposed, and that amounts to denial. The world is eternal: then, beyond question, God has had it forced upon

Him. The world was created: then God is an impossibility. How could He have subsisted through an eternity, not knowing that He would presently want to create the world? How could He have failed to foresee all the results?

"Whence did He derive the essence of creation? Evidently from Himself. If, then, the world proceeds from God, how can you account for evil? That Evil should proceed from Good is absurd. If evil does not exist, what do you make of social life and its laws? On all hands we find a precipice! On every side a gulf in which reason is lost! Then social science must be altogether reconstructed.

"Listen to me, uncle; until some splendid genius shall have taken account of the obvious inequality of intellects and the general sense of humanity, the word God will be constantly arraigned, and Society will rest on shifting sands. The secret of the various moral zones through which man passes will be discovered by the analysis of the animal type as a whole. That animal type has hitherto been studied with reference only to its differences, not to its similitudes; in its organic manifestations, not in its faculties. Animal faculties are perfected in direct transmission, in obedience to laws which remain to be discovered. These faculties correspond to the forces which express them, and those forces are essentially material and divisible.

"Material faculties! Reflect on this juxtaposition of words. Is not this a problem as insoluble as that of the first communication of motion to matter—an unsounded gulf of which the difficulties were transposed rather than removed by Newton's system? Again, the universal assimilation of light by everything that exists on earth demands a new study of our globe. The same animal differs in the tropics of India and in the North. Under the angular or the vertical incidence of the sun's rays nature is developed the same, but not the same; identical in its principles, but totally dissimilar in its outcome. The phenomenon that amazes our eyes in the zoological world when we compare the butterflies of Brazil with those of Europe, is even more startling in the world of Mind.

A particular facial angle, a certain amount of brain convolutions, are indispensable to produce Columbus, Raphael, Napoleon, Laplace, or Beethoven: the sunless valley produces the cretin—draw your own conclusions. Why such differences, due to the more or less ample diffusion of light to men? The masses of suffering humanity, more or less active, fed, and enlightened, are a difficulty to be accounted for, crying out against God.

"Why in great joy do we always want to quit the earth? whence comes the longing to rise which every creature has known or will know? Motion is a great soul, and its alliance with matter is just as difficult to account for as the origin of thought in man. In these days science is one; it is impossible to touch politics independent of moral questions, and these are bound up with scientific questions. It seems to me that we are on the eve of a great human struggle; the forces are there; only I do not see the General.

"*November* 25.

"Believe me, dear uncle, it is hard to give up the life that is in us without a pang. I am returning to Blois with a heavy grip at my heart; I shall die then, taking with me some useful truths. No personal interest debases my regrets. Is earthly fame a guerdon to those who believe that they will mount to a higher sphere?

"I am by no means in love with the two syllables *Lam* and *bert;* whether spoken with respect or with contempt over my grave, they can make no change in my ultimate destiny. I feel myself strong and energetic; I might become a power; I feel in myself a life so luminous that it might enlighten a world, and yet I am shut up in a sort of mineral, as perhaps indeed are the colors you admire on the neck of an Indian bird. I should need to embrace the whole world, to clasp and re-create it; but those who have done this, who have thus embraced and remoulded it began—did they not?—by being a wheel in the machine. I can only be crushed. Mahomet had the sword; Jesus had the cross; I shall die unknown. I shall be at Blois for a day, and then in my coffin.

"Do you know why I have come back to Swedenborg after vast studies of all religions, and after proving to myself, by reading all the works published within the last sixty years by the patient English, by Germany, and by France, how deeply true were my youthful views about the Bible? Swedenborg undoubtedly epitomizes all the religions—or rather the one religion—of humanity. Though forms of worship are infinitely various, neither their true meaning nor their metaphysical interpretation has ever varied. In short, man has, and has had, but one religion.

"Sivaism, Vishnuism, and Brahmanism, the three primitive creeds, originating as they did in Thibet, in the valley of the Indus, and on the vast plains of the Ganges, ended their warfare some thousand years before the birth of Christ by adopting the Hindoo Trimourti. The Trimourti is our Trinity. From this dogma Magianism arose in Persia; in Egypt, the African beliefs and the Mosaic law; the worship of the Cabiri, and the polytheism of Greece and Rome. While by this ramification of the Trimourti the Asiatic myths became adapted to the imaginations of various races in the lands they reached by the agency of certain sages whom men elevated to be demi-gods—Mithra, Bacchus, Hermes, Hercules, and the rest—Buddha, the great reformer of the three primeval religions, lived in India, and founded his Church there, a sect which still numbers two hundred millions more believers than Christianity can show, while it certainly influenced the powerful Will both of Jesus and of Confucius.

"Then Christianity raised her standard. Subsequently Mahomet fused Judaism and Christianity, the Bible and the Gospel, in one book, the Koran, adapting them to the apprehension of the Arab race. Finally, Swedenborg borrowed from Magianism, Brahmanism, Buddhism, and Christian mysticism all the truth and divine beauty that those four great religious books hold in common, and added to them a doctrine, a basis of reasoning, that may be termed mathematical.

"Any man who plunges into those religious waters, of

which the sources are not all known, will find proofs that Zoroaster, Moses, Buddha, Confucius, Jesus Christ, and Swedenborg had identical principles and aimed at identical ends.

"The last of them all, Swedenborg, will perhaps be the Buddha of the North. Obscure and diffuse as his writings are, we find in them the elements of a magnificent conception of society. His Theocracy is sublime, and his creed is the only acceptable one to superior souls. He alone brings man into immediate communion with God, he gives a thirst for God, he has freed the majesty of God from the trappings in which other human dogmas have disguised Him. He left Him where He is, making His myriad creations and creatures gravitate towards Him through successive transformations which promise a more immediate and more natural future than the Catholic idea of Eternity. Swedenborg has absolved God from the reproach attaching to Him in the estimation of tender souls for the perpetuity of revenge to punish the sin of a moment—a system of injustice and cruelty.

"Each man may know for himself what hope he has of life eternal, and whether this world has any rational sense. I mean to make the attempt. And this attempt may save the world, just as much as the cross at Jerusalem or the sword at Mecca. These were both the offspring of the desert. Of the thirty-three years of Christ's life, we only know the history of nine; His life of seclusion prepared Him for His life of glory. And I too crave for the desert!"

Notwithstanding the difficulties of the task, I have felt it my duty to depict Lambert's boyhood, the unknown life to which I owe the only happy hours, the only pleasant memories, of my early days. Excepting during those two years I had nothing but annoyances and weariness. Though some happiness was mine at a later time, it was always incomplete.

I have been diffuse, I know; but in default of entering into the whole wide heart and brain of Louis Lambert—two words which inadequately express the infinite aspects of his

inner life—it would be almost impossible to make the second part of his intellectual history intelligible—a phase that was unknown to the world and to me, but of which the mystical outcome was made evident to my eyes in the course of a few hours. Those who have not already dropped this volume, will, I hope, understand the events I still have to tell, forming as they do a sort of second existence lived by this creature—may I not say this creation?—in whom everything was to be so extraordinary, even his end.

When Louis returned to Blois, his uncle was eager to procure him some amusement; but the poor priest was regarded as a perfect leper in that godly-minded town. No one would have anything to say to a revolutionary who had taken the oaths. His society, therefore, consisted of a few individuals of what were then called liberal or patriotic, or constitutional opinions, on whom he would call for a rubber of whist or of boston.

At the first house where he was introduced by his uncle, Louis met a young lady, whose circumstances obliged her to remain in this circle, so contemned by those of the fashionable world, though her fortune was such as to make it probable that she might by and by marry into the highest aristocracy of the province. Mademoiselle Pauline de Villenoix was sole heiress to the wealth amassed by her grandfather, a Jew named Salomon, who, contrary to the customs of his nation, had, in his old age, married a Christian and a Catholic. He had an only son, who was brought up in his mother's faith. At his father's death young Salomon purchased what was known at that time as a *savonnette à vilain* (literally *a cake of soap for a serf*), a small estate called Villenoix, which he contrived to get registered with a baronial title, and took its name. He died unmarried, but he left a natural daughter, to whom he bequeathed the greater part of his fortune, including the lands of Villenoix. He appointed one of his uncles, Monsieur Joseph Salomon, to be the girl's guardian. The old Jew was so devoted to his ward that he seemed willing

to make great sacrifices for the sake of marrying her well. But Mademoiselle de Villenoix's birth, and the cherished prejudice against Jews that prevails in the provinces, would not allow of her being received in the very exclusive circle which, rightly or wrongly, considers itself noble, notwithstanding her own large fortune and her guardian's.

Monsieur Joseph Salomon was resolved that if she could not secure a country squire, his niece should go to Paris and make choice of a husband among the peers of France, liberal or monarchical; as to happiness, that he believed he could secure her by the terms of the marriage contract.

Mademoiselle de Villenoix was now twenty. Her remarkable beauty and gifts of mind were surer guarantees of happiness than those offered by money. Her features were of the purest type of Jewish beauty; the oval lines, so noble and maidenly, have an indescribable stamp of the ideal, and seem to speak of the joys of the East, its unchangeably blue sky, the glories of its lands, and the fabulous riches of life there. She had fine eyes, shaded by deep eyelids, fringed with thick, curled lashes. Biblical innocence sat on her brow. Her complexion was of the pure whiteness of the Levite's robe. She was habitually silent and thoughtful, but her movements and gestures betrayed a quiet grace, as her speech bore witness to a woman's sweet and loving nature. She had not, indeed, the rosy freshness, the fruit-like bloom which blush on a girl's cheek during her careless years. Darker shadows, with here and there a redder vein, took the place of color, symptomatic of an energetic temper and nervous irritability, such as many men do not like to meet with in a wife, while to others they are an indication of the most sensitive chastity and passion mingled with pride.

As soon as Louis saw Mademoiselle de Villenoix, he discerned the angel within. The richest powers of his soul, and his tendency to ecstatic reverie, every faculty within him was at once concentrated in boundless love, the first love of a young man, a passion which is strong indeed in all, but which in him was raised to incalculable power by the perennial ardor

of his senses, the character of his ideas, and the manner in which he lived. This passion became a gulf, into which the hapless fellow threw everything; a gulf whither the mind dare not venture, since his, flexible and firm as it was, was lost there. There all was mysterious, for everything went on in that moral world, closed to most men, whose laws were revealed to him—perhaps to his sorrow.

When an accident threw me in the way of his uncle, the good man showed me into the room which Lambert had at that time lived in. I wanted to find some vestiges of his writings, if he should have left any. There, among his papers, untouched by the old man from that fine instinct of grief that characterizes the aged, I found a number of letters, too illegible ever to have been sent to Mademoiselle de Villenoix. My familiarity with Lambert's writing enabled me in time to decipher the hieroglyphics of this shorthand, the result of impatience and a frenzy of passion. Carried away by his feelings, he had written without being conscious of the irregularity of words too slow to express his thoughts. He must have been compelled to copy these chaotic attempts, for the lines often ran into each other; but he was also afraid perhaps of not having sufficiently disguised his feelings, and at first, at any rate, he had probably written his love-letters twice over.

It required all the fervency of my devotion to his memory, and the sort of fanaticism which comes of such a task, to enable me to divine and restore the meaning of the five letters that here follow. These documents, preserved by me with pious care, are the only material evidence of his overmastering passion. Mademoiselle de Villenoix has no doubt destroyed the real letters that she received, eloquent witnesses to the delirium she inspired.

The first of these papers, evidently a rough sketch, betrays by its style and by its length the many emendations, the heartfelt alarms, the innumerable terrors caused by a desire to please; the changes of expression and the hesitation between the whirl of ideas that beset a man as he indites his

first love-letter—a letter he never will forget, each line the result of a reverie, each word the subject of long cogitation, while the most unbridled passion known to man feels the necessity of the most reserved utterance, and like a giant stooping to enter a hovel, speaks humbly and low, so as not to alarm a girl's soul.

No antiquary ever handled his palimpsests with greater respect than I showed in reconstructing these mutilated documents of such joy and suffering as must always be sacred to those who have known similar joy and grief.

I

"Mademoiselle, when you have read this letter, if you ever should read it, my life will be in your hands, for I love you; and to me, the hope of being loved is life. Others, perhaps, ere now, have, in speaking of themselves, misused the words I must employ to depict the state of my soul; yet, I beseech you to believe in the truth of my expressions; though weak, they are sincere. Perhaps I ought not thus to proclaim my love. Indeed, my heart counseled me to wait in silence till my passion should touch you, that I might the better conceal it if its silent demonstrations should displease you; or till I could express it even more delicately than in words if I found favor in your eyes. However, after having listened for long to the coy fears that fill a youthful heart with alarms, I write in obedience to the instinct which drags useless lamentations from the dying.

"It has needed all my courage to silence the pride of poverty, and to overleap the barriers which prejudice erects between you and me. I have had to smother many reflections to love you in spite of your wealth; and as I write to you, am I not in danger of the scorn which women often reserve for professions of love, which they accept only as one more tribute of flattery? But we cannot help rushing with all our might towards happiness, or being attracted to the life of love as a plant is to the light; we must have been very

unhappy before we can conquer the torment, the anguish of those secret deliberations when reason proves to us by a thousand arguments how barren our yearning must be if it remains buried in our hearts, and when hopes bid us dare everything.

"I was happy when I admired you in silence; I was so lost in the contemplation of your beautiful soul, that only to see you left me hardly anything further to imagine. And I should not now have dared to address you if I had not heard that you were leaving. What misery has that one word brought upon me! Indeed, it is my despair that has shown me the extent of my attachment—it is unbounded. Mademoiselle, you will never know—at least, I hope you may never know—the anguish of dreading lest you should lose the only happiness that has dawned on you on earth, the only thing that has thrown a gleam of light in the darkness of misery. I understood yesterday that my life was no more in myself, but in you. There is but one woman in the world for me, as there is but one thought in my soul. I dare not tell you to what a state I am reduced by my love for you. I would have you only as a gift from yourself; I must therefore avoid showing myself to you in all the attractiveness of dejection—for is it not often more impressive to a noble soul than that of good fortune? There are many things I may not tell you. Indeed, I have too lofty a notion of love to taint it with ideas that are alien to its nature. If my soul is worthy of yours, and my life pure, your heart will have a sympathetic insight, and you will understand me!

"It is the fate of man to offer himself to the woman who can make him believe in happiness; but it is your prerogative to reject the truest passion if it is not in harmony with the vague voices in your heart—that I know. If my lot, as decided by you, must be adverse to my hopes, mademoiselle, let me appeal to the delicacy of your maiden soul and the ingenuous compassion of a woman to burn my letter. On my knees I beseech you to forget all! Do not mock at a feeling that is wholly respectful, and that is too deeply graven on my

heart ever to be effaced. Break my heart, but do not rend it! Let the expression of my first love, a pure and youthful love, be lost in your pure and youthful heart! Let it die there as a prayer rises up to die in the bosom of God!

"I owe you much gratitude: I have spent delicious hours occupied in watching you, and giving myself up to the faint dreams of my life; do not crush these long but transient joys by some girlish irony. Be satisfied not to answer me. I shall know how to interpret your silence; you will see me no more. If I must be condemned to know for ever what happiness means, and to be for ever bereft of it; if, like a banished angel, I am to cherish the sense of celestial joys while bound for ever to a world of sorrow—well, I can keep the secret of my love as well as that of my griefs.—And farewell!

"Yes, I resign you to God, to whom I will pray for you, beseeching Him to grant you a happy life; for even if I am driven from your heart, into which I have crept by stealth, still I shall ever be near you. Otherwise, of what value would the sacred words be of this letter, my first and perhaps my last entreaty? If I should ever cease to think of you, to love you whether in happiness or in woe, should I not deserve my punishment?"

II

"You are not going away! And I am loved! I, a poor, insignificant creature! My beloved Pauline, you do not yourself know the power of the look I believe in, the look you gave me to tell me that you had chosen me—you so young and lovely, with the world at your feet!

"To enable you to understand my happiness, I should have to give you a history of my life. If you had rejected me, all was over for me. I have suffered too much. Yes, my love for you, my comforting and stupendous love, was a last effort of yearning for the happiness my soul strove to reach—a soul crushed by fruitless labor, consumed by fears that make me doubt myself, eaten into by despair which has often urged me to die. No one in the world can conceive of the terrors my

fateful imagination inflicts on me. It often bears me up to the sky, and suddenly flings me to earth again from prodigious heights. Deep-seated rushes of power, or some rare and subtle instance of peculiar lucidity, assure me now and then that I am capable of great things. Then I embrace the universe in my mind, I knead, shape it, inform it, I comprehend it—or fancy that I do; then suddenly I awake—alone, sunk in blackest night, helpless and weak; I forget the light I saw but now, I find no succor; above all, there is no heart where I may take refuge.

"This distress of my inner life affects my physical existence. The nature of my character gives me over to the raptures of happiness as defenceless as when the fearful light of reflection comes to analyze and demolish them. Gifted as I am with the melancholy faculty of seeing obstacles and success with equal clearness, according to the mood of the moment, I am happy or miserable by turns.

"Thus, when first I met you, I felt the presence of an angelic nature, I breathed an air that was sweet to my burning breast, I heard in my soul the voice that never can be false, telling me that here was happiness; but perceiving all the barriers that divided us, I understood for the first time what worldly prejudices were: I understood the vastness of their pettiness, and these difficulties terrified me more than the prospect of happiness could delight me. At once I felt the awful reaction which casts my expansive soul back on itself; the smile you had brought to my lips suddenly turned to a bitter grimace, and I could only strive to keep calm, while my soul was boiling with the turmoil of contradictory emotions. In short, I experienced that gnawing pang to which twenty-three years of suppressed sighs and betrayed affections have not inured me.

"Well, Pauline, the look by which you promised that I should be happy suddenly warmed my vitality, and turned all my sorrows into joy. Now, I could wish that I had suffered more. My love is suddenly full-grown. My soul was a wide territory that lacked the blessing of sunshine, and

your eyes have shed light on it. Beloved providence! you will be all in all to me, orphan as I am, without a relation but my uncle. You will be my whole family, as you are my whole wealth, nay, the whole world to me. Have you not bestowed on me every gladness man can desire in that chaste —lavish—timid glance?

"You have given me incredible self-confidence and audacity. I can dare all things now. I came back to Blois in deep dejection. Five years of study in the heart of Paris had made me look on the world as a prison. I had conceived of vast schemes, and dared not speak of them. Fame seemed to me a prize for charlatans, to which a really noble spirit should not stoop. Thus, my ideas could only make their way by the assistance of a man bold enough to mount the platform of the press, and to harangue loudly the simpletons he scorns. This kind of courage I have not. I ploughed my way on, crushed by the verdict of the crowd, in despair at never making it hear me. I was at once too humble and too lofty! I swallowed my thoughts as other men swallow humiliations. I had even come to despise knowledge, blaming it for yielding no real happiness.

"But since yesterday I am wholly changed. For your sake I now covet every palm of glory, every triumph of success. When I lay my head on your knees, I could wish to attract to you the eyes of the whole world, just as I long to concentrate in my love every idea, every power that is in me. The most splendid celebrity is a possession that genius alone can create. Well, I can, at my will, make for you a bed of laurels. And if the silent ovation paid to science is not all you desire, I have within me the sword of the Word; I could run in the path of honor and ambition where others only crawl.

"Command me, Pauline; I will be whatever you will. My iron will can do anything—I am loved! Armed with that thought, ought not a man to sweep everything before him? The man who wants all can do all. If you are the prize of success, I enter the lists to-morrow. To win such a look as that you bestowed on me, I would leap the deepest abyss.

Through you I understand the fabulous achievements of chivalry and the most fantastic tales of the *Arabian Nights.* I can believe now in the most fantastic excesses of love, and in the success of a prisoner's wildest attempt to recover his liberty. You have aroused the thousand virtues that lay dormant within me—patience, resignation, all the powers of my heart, all the strength of my soul. I live by you and—heavenly thought!—for you. Everything now has a meaning for me in life. I understand everything, even the vanities of wealth.

"I find myself shedding all the pearls of the Indies at your feet; I fancy you reclining either on the rarest flowers, or on the softest tissues, and all the splendor of the world seems hardly worthy of you, for whom I would I could command the harmony and the light that are given out by the harps of seraphs and the stars of heaven! Alas! a poor, studious poet, I offer you in words treasures I cannot bestow; I can only give you my heart, in which you reign for ever. I have nothing else. But are there no treasures in eternal gratitude, in a smile whose expression will perpetually vary with perennial happiness, under the constant eagerness of my devotion to guess the wishes of your loving soul? Has not one celestial glance given us assurance of always understanding each other?

"I have a prayer now to be said to God every night—a prayer full of you: 'Let my Pauline be happy!' And will you fill all my days as you now fill my heart?

"Farewell, I can but trust you to God alone!"

III

"Pauline! tell me if I can in any way have displeased you yesterday? Throw off the pride of heart which inflicts on me the secret tortures that can be caused by one we love. Scold me if you will! Since yesterday, a vague, unutterable dread of having offended you pours grief on the life of feeling which you had made so sweet and so rich. The lightest veil

that comes between two souls sometimes grows to be a brazen wall. There are no venial crimes in love! If you have the very spirit of that noble sentiment, you must feel all its pangs, and we must be unceasingly careful not to fret each other by some heedless word.

"No doubt, my beloved treasure, if there is any fault, it is in me. I cannot pride myself in the belief that I understand a woman's heart in all the expansion of its tenderness, all the grace of its devotedness; but I will always endeavor to appreciate the value of what you vouchsafe to show me of the secrets of yours.

"Speak to me! Answer me soon! The melancholy into which we are thrown by the idea of a wrong done is frightful; it casts a shroud over life, and doubts on everything.

"I spent this morning sitting on the bank by the sunken road, gazing at the turrets of Villenoix, not daring to go to our hedge. If you could imagine all I saw in my soul! What gloomy visions passed before me under the gray sky, whose cold sheen added to my dreary mood! I had dark presentiments! I was terrified lest I should fail to make you happy.

"I must tell you everything, my dear Pauline. There are moments when the spirit of vitality seems to abandon me. I feel bereft of all strength. Everything is a burden to me; every fibre of my body is inert, every sense is flaccid, my sight grows dim, my tongue is paralyzed, my imagination is extinct, desire is dead—nothing survives but my mere human vitality. At such times, though you were in all the splendor of your beauty, though you should lavish on me your subtlest smiles and tenderest words, an evil influence would blind me, and distort the most ravishing melody into discordant sounds. At those times—as I believe—some argumentative demon stands before me, showing me the void beneath the most real possessions. This pitiless demon mows down every flower, and mocks at the sweetest feelings, saying: 'Well—and then?' He mars the fairest work by showing me its skeleton, and reveals the mechanism of things while hiding the beautiful results.

"At those terrible moments, when the evil spirit takes possession of me, when the divine light is darkened in my soul without my knowing the cause, I sit in grief and anguish, I wish myself deaf and dumb, I long for death to give me rest. These hours of doubt and uneasiness are perhaps inevitable; at any rate, they teach me not to be proud after the flights which have borne me to the skies where I have gathered a full harvest of thoughts; for it is always after some long excursion in the vast fields of the intellect, and after the most luminous speculations, that I tumble, broken and weary, into this limbo. At such a moment, my angel, a wife would doubt my love for her—at any rate, she might. If she were capricious, ailing, or depressed, she would need the comforting overflow of ingenious affection, and I should not have a glance to bestow on her. It is my shame, Pauline, to have to tell you that at such times I could weep with you, but that nothing could make me smile.

"A woman can always conceal her troubles; for her child, or for the man she loves, she can laugh in the midst of suffering. And could not I, for you, Pauline, imitate the exquisite reserve of a woman? Since yesterday I have doubted my own power. If I could displease you once, if I failed once to understand you, I dread lest I should often be carried out of our happy circle by my evil demon. Supposing I were to have many of those dreadful moods, or that my unbounded love could not make up for the dark hours of my life —that I were doomed to remain such as I am?—Fatal doubts!

"Power is indeed a fatal possession if what I feel within me is power. Pauline, go! Leave me, desert me! Sooner would I endure every ill in life than endure the misery of knowing that you were unhappy through me.

"But, perhaps, the demon has had such empire over me only because I have had no gentle, white hands about me to drive him off. No woman has ever shed on me the balm of her affection; and I know not whether, if love should wave his pinions over my head in these moments of exhaustion,

new strength might not be given to my spirit. This terrible melancholy is perhaps a result of my isolation, one of the torments of a lonely soul which pays for its hidden treasures with groans and unknown suffering. Those who enjoy little shall suffer little; immense happiness entails unutterable anguish!

"How terrible a doom! If it be so, must we not shudder for ourselves, we who are superhumanly happy? If nature sells us everything at its true value, into what pit are we not fated to fall? Ah! the most fortunate lovers are those who die together in the midst of their youth and love! How sad it all is! Does my soul foresee evil in the future? I examine myself, wondering whether there is anything in me that can cause you a moment's anxiety. I love you too selfishly perhaps? I shall be laying on your beloved head a burden heavy out of all proportion to the joy my love can bring to your heart. If there dwells in me some inexorable power which I must obey—if I am compelled to curse when you pray, if some dark thought coerces me when I would fain kneel at your feet and play as a child, will you not be jealous of that wayward and tricky spirit?

"You understand, dearest heart, that what I dread is not being wholly yours; that I would gladly forego all the sceptres and the palms of the world to enshrine you in one eternal thought, to see a perfect life and an exquisite poem in our rapturous love; to throw my soul into it, drown my powers, and wring from each hour the joys it has to give!

"Ah, my memories of love are crowding back upon me, the clouds of despair will lift. Farewell. I leave you now to be more entirely yours. My beloved soul, I look for a line, a word that may restore my peace of mind. Let me know whether I really grieved my Pauline, or whether some uncertain expression of her countenance misled me. I could not bear to have to reproach myself after a whole life of happiness, for ever having met you without a smile of love, a honeyed word. To grieve the woman I love—Pauline, I should count it a crime. Tell me the truth, do not put me off

with some magnanimous subterfuge, but forgive me without cruelty."

FRAGMENT.

"Is so perfect an attachment happiness? Yes, for years of suffering would not pay for an hour of love.

"Yesterday, your sadness, as I suppose, passed into my soul as swiftly as a shadow falls. Were you sad or suffering? I was wretched. Whence came my distress? Write to me at once. Why did I not know it? We are not yet completely one in mind. At two leagues' distance or at a thousand I ought to feel your pains and sorrows. I shall not believe that I love you till my life is so bound up with yours that our life is one, till our hearts, our thoughts are one. I must be where you are, see what you see, feel what you feel, be with you in thought. Did not I know, at once, that your carriage had been overthrown and you were bruised? But on that day I had been with you, I had never left you, I could see you. When my uncle asked me what made me turn so pale, I answered at once, 'Mademoiselle de Villenoix has had a fall.'

"Why, then, yesterday, did I fail to read your soul? Did you wish to hide the cause of your grief? However, I fancied I could feel that you were arguing in my favor, though in vain, with that dreadful Salomon, who freezes my blood. That man is not of our heaven.

"Why do you insist that our happiness, which has no resemblance to that of other people, should conform to the laws of the world? And yet I delight too much in your bashfulness, your religion, your superstitions, not to obey your lightest whim. What you do must be right; nothing can be purer than your mind, as nothing is lovelier than your face, which reflects your divine soul.

"I shall wait for a letter before going along the lanes to meet the sweet hour you grant me. Oh! if you could know how the sight of those turrets makes my heart throb when I see them edged with light by the moon, our only confidante."

IV

"Farewell to glory, farewell to the future, to the life I had dreamed of! Now, my well-beloved, my glory is that I am yours, and worthy of you; my future lies entirely in the hope of seeing you; and is not my life summed up in sitting at your feet, in lying under your eyes, in drawing deep breaths in the heaven you have created for me? All my powers, all my thoughts must be yours, since you could speak those thrilling words, 'Your sufferings must be mine!' Should I not be stealing some joys from love, some moments from happiness, some experiences from your divine spirit, if I gave my hours to study—ideas to the world and poems to the poets? Nay, nay, my very life, I will treasure everything for you; I will bring to you every flower of my soul. Is there anything fine enough, splendid enough, in all the resources of the world, or of intellect, to do honor to a heart so rich, so pure as yours—the heart to which I dare now and again to unite my own? Yes, now and again, I dare believe that I can love as much as you do.

"And yet, no; you are the angel-woman; there will always be a greater charm in the expression of your feelings, more harmony in your voice, more grace in your smile, more purity in your looks than in mine. Let me feel that you are the creature of a higher sphere than that I live in; it will be your pride to have descended from it; mine, that I should have deserved you; and you will not perhaps have fallen too far by coming down to me in my poverty and misery. Nay, if a woman's most glorious refuge is in a heart that is wholly her own, you will always reign supreme in mine. Not a thought, not a deed, shall ever pollute this heart, this glorious sanctuary, so long as you vouchsafe to dwell in it—and will you not dwell in it for ever? Did you not enchant me by the words, 'Now and for ever?' *Nunc et semper!* And I have written these words of our ritual below your portrait—words worthy of you, as they are of God. He is *nunc et semper,* as my love is.

"Never, no, never, can I exhaust that which is immense, infinite, unbounded—and such is the feeling I have for you; I have imagined its immeasurable extent, as we measure space by the dimensions of one of its parts. I have had ineffable joys, whole hours filled with delicious meditation, as I have recalled a single gesture or the tone of a word of yours. Thus there will be memories of which the magnitude will overpower me, if the reminiscence of a sweet and friendly interview is enough to make me shed tears of joy, to move and thrill my soul, and to be an inexhaustible wellspring of gladness. Love is the life of angels!

"I can never, I believe, exhaust my joy in seeing you. This rapture, the least fervid of any, though it never can last long enough, has made me apprehend the eternal contemplation in which seraphs and spirits abide in the presence of God; nothing can be more natural, if from His essence there emanates a light as fruitful of new emotions as that of your eyes is, of your imposing brow, and your beautiful countenance—the image of your soul. Then, the soul, our second self, whose pure form can never perish, makes our love immortal. I would there were some other language than that I use to express to you the ever-new ecstasy of my love; but since there is one of our own creating, since our looks are living speech, must we not meet face to face to read in each other's eyes those questions and answers from the heart, that are so living, so penetrating, that one evening you could say to me, 'Be silent!' when I was not speaking. Do you remember it, dear life?

"When I am away from you in the darkness of absence, am I not reduced to use human words, too feeble to express heavenly feelings? But words at any rate represent the marks these feelings leave in my soul, just as the word *God* imperfectly sums up the notions we form of that mysterious First Cause. But, in spite of the subtleties and infinite variety of language, I have no words that can express to you the exquisite union by which my life is merged into yours whenever I think of you.

"And with what word can I conclude when I cease writing to you, and yet do not part from you? What can *farewell* mean, unless in death? But is death a farewell? Would not my spirit be then more closely one with yours? Ah! my first and last thought; formerly I offered you my heart and life on my knees; now what fresh blossoms of feelings can I discover in my soul that I have not already given you? It would be a gift of a part of what is wholly yours.

"Are you my future? How deeply I regret the past! I would I could have back all the years that are ours no more, and give them to you to reign over, as you do over my present life. What indeed was that time when I knew you not? It would be a void but that I was so wretched."

FRAGMENT.

"Beloved angel, how delightful last evening was! How full of riches your dear heart is! And is your love endless, like mine? Each word brought me fresh joy, and each look made it deeper. The placid expression of your countenance gave our thoughts a limitless horizon. It was all as infinite as the sky, and as bland as its blue. The refinement of your adored features repeated itself by some inexplicable magic in your pretty movements and your least gestures. I knew that you were all graciousness, all love, but I did not know how variously graceful you could be. Everything combined to urge me to tender solicitations, to make me ask the first kiss that a woman always refuses, no doubt that it may be snatched from her. You, dear soul of my life, will never guess beforehand what you may grant to my love, and will yield perhaps without knowing it! You are utterly true, and obey your heart alone.

"The sweet tones of your voice blended with the tender harmonies that filled the quiet air, the cloudless sky. Not a bird piped, not a breeze whispered—solitude, you, and I. The motionless leaves did not quiver in the beautiful sunset hues which are both light and shadow. You felt that

heavenly poetry—you who experienced so many various emotions, and who so often raised your eyes to heaven to avoid answering me. You who are proud and saucy, humble and masterful, who give yourself to me so completely in spirit and in thought, and evade the most bashful caress. Dear witcheries of the heart! They ring in my ears; they sound and play there still. Sweet words but half spoken, like a child's speech, neither promise nor confession, but allowing love to cherish its fairest hopes without fear or torment! How pure a memory for life! What a free blossoming of all the flowers that spring from the soul, which a mere trifle can blight, but which, at that moment, everything warmed and expanded.

"And it will be always so, will it not, my beloved? As I recall, this morning, the fresh and living delights revealed to me in that hour, I am conscious of a joy which makes me conceive of true love as an ocean of everlasting and ever-new experiences, into which we may plunge with increasing delight. Every day, every word, every kiss, every glance, must increase it by its tribute of past happiness. Hearts that are large enough never to forget must live every moment in their past joys as much as in those promised by the future. This was my dream of old, and now it is no longer a dream! Have I not met on this earth with an angel who has made me know all its happiness, as a reward, perhaps, for having endured all its torments? Angel of heaven, I salute thee with a kiss.

"I shall send you this hymn of thanksgiving from my heart, I owe it to you; but it can hardly express my gratitude or the morning worship my heart offers up day by day to her who epitomized the whole gospel of the heart in this divine word: 'Believe.'"

V

"What! no further difficulties, dearest heart! We shall be free to belong to each other every day, every hour, every minute, and for ever! We may be as happy for all the days of our life as we now are by stealth, at rare intervals! Our

pure, deep feelings will assume the expression of the thousand fond acts I have dreamed of. For me your little foot will be bared, you will be wholly mine! Such happiness kills me; it is too much for me. My head is too weak, it will burst with the vehemence of my ideas. I cry and I laugh—I am possessed! Every joy is as an arrow of flame; it pierces and burns me. In fancy you rise before my eyes, ravished and dazzled by numberless and capricious images of delight.

"In short, our whole future life is before me—its torrents, its still places, its joys; it seethes, it flows on, it lies sleeping; then again it awakes fresh and young. I see myself and you side by side, walking with equal pace, living in the same thought; each dwelling in the other's heart, understanding each other, responding to each other as an echo catches and repeats a sound across wide distances.

"Can life be long when it is thus consumed hour by hour? Shall we not die in a first embrace? What if our souls have already met in that sweet evening kiss which almost overpowered us—a feeling kiss, but the crown of my hopes, the ineffectual expression of all the prayers I breathe while we are apart, hidden in my soul like remorse?

"I, who would creep back and hide in the hedge only to hear your footsteps as you went homewards—I may henceforth admire you at my leisure, see you busy, moving, smiling, prattling! An endless joy! You cannot imagine all the gladness it is to me to see you going and coming; only a man can know that deep delight. Your least movement gives me greater pleasure than a mother even can feel as she sees her child asleep or at play. I love you with every kind of love in one. The grace of your least gesture is always new to me. I fancy I could spend whole nights breathing your breath; I would I could steal into every detail of your life, be the very substance of your thoughts—be your very self.

"Well, we shall, at any rate, never part again! No human alloy shall ever disturb our love, infinite in its phases and as pure as all things are which are One—our love, vast as the

sea, vast as the sky! You are mine! all mine! I may look into the depths of your eyes to read the sweet soul that alternately hides and shines there, to anticipate your wishes.

"My best-beloved, listen to some things I have never yet dared to tell you, but which I may confess to you now. I felt a certain bashfulness of soul which hindered the full expression of my feelings, so I strove to shroud them under the garb of thoughts. But now I long to lay my heart bare before you, to tell you of the ardor of my dreams, to reveal the boiling demands of my senses, excited, no doubt, by the solitude in which I have lived, perpetually fired by conceptions of happiness, and aroused by you, so fair in form, so attractive in manner. How can I express to you my thirst for the unknown rapture of possessing an adored wife, a rapture to which the union of two souls by love must give frenzied intensity. Yes, my Pauline, I have sat for hours in a sort of stupor caused by the violence of my passionate yearning, lost in the dream of a caress as though in a bottomless abyss. At such moments my whole vitality, my thoughts and powers, are merged and united in what I must call desire, for lack of a word to express that nameless delirium.

"And I may confess to you now that one day, when I would not take your hand when you offered it so sweetly—an act of melancholy prudence that made you doubt my love—I was in one of those fits of madness when a man could commit a murder to possess a woman. Yes, if I had felt the exquisite pressure you offered me as vividly as I heard your voice in my heart, I know not to what lengths my passion might not have carried me. But I can be silent, and suffer a great deal. Why speak of this anguish when my visions are to become realities? It will be in my power now to make life one long love-making!

"Dearest love, there is a certain effect of light on your black hair which could rivet me for hours, my eyes full of tears, as I gazed at your sweet person, were it not that you turn away and say, 'For shame; you make me quite shy!'

"To-morrow, then, our love is to be made known! Oh,

Pauline! the eyes of others, the curiosity of strangers, weigh on my soul. Let us go to Villenoix, and stay there far from every one. I should like no creature in human form to intrude into the sanctuary where you are to be mine; I could even wish that, when we are dead, it should cease to exist—should be destroyed. Yes, I would fain hide from all nature a happiness which we alone can understand, alone can feel, which is so stupendous that I throw myself into it only to die—it is a gulf!

"Do not be alarmed by the tears that have wetted this page; they are tears of joy. My only blessing, we need never part again!"

In 1823 I traveled from Paris to Touraine by *diligence*. At Mer we took up a passenger for Blois. As the guard put him into that part of the coach where I had my seat, he said jestingly:

"You will not be crowded, Monsieur Lefebvre!"—I was, in fact, alone.

On hearing this name, and seeing a white-haired old man, who looked eighty at least, I naturally thought of Lambert's uncle. After a few ingenious questions, I discovered that I was not mistaken. The good man had been looking after his vintage at Mer, and was returning to Blois. I then asked for some news of my old "chum." At the first word, the old priest's face, as grave and stern already as that of a soldier who has gone through many hardships, became more sad and dark; the lines on his forehead were slightly knit, he set his lips, and said, with a suspicious glance:

"Then you have never seen him since you left the College?"

"Indeed, I have not," said I. "But we are equally to blame for our forgetfulness. Young men, as you know, lead such an adventurous and storm-tossed life when they leave their school-forms, that it is only by meeting that they can be sure of an enduring affection. However, a reminiscence of youth sometimes comes as a reminder, and it is impossible

to forget entirely, especially when two lads have been such friends as we were. We went by the name of the Poet-and-Pythagoras."

I told him my name; when he heard it, the worthy man grew gloomier than ever.

"Then you have not heard his story?" said he. "My poor nephew was to be married to the richest heiress in Blois; but the day before his wedding he went mad."

"Lambert! Mad!" cried I in dismay. "But from what cause? He had the finest memory, the most strongly-constituted brain, the soundest judgment, I ever met with. Really a great genius—with too great a passion for mysticism perhaps; but the kindest heart in the world. Something most extraordinary must have happened?"

"I see you knew him well," said the priest.

From Mer, till we reached Blois, we talked only of my poor friend, with long digressions, by which I learned the facts I have already related in the order of their interest. I confessed to his uncle the character of our studies and of his nephew's predominant ideas; then the old man told me of the events that had come into Lambert's life since our parting. From Monsieur Lefebvre's account, Lambert had betrayed some symptoms of madness before his marriage; but they were such as are common to men who love passionately, and seemed to me less startling when I knew how vehement his love had been and when I saw Mademoiselle de Villenoix. In the country, where ideas are scarce, a man overflowing with original thought and devoted to a system, as Louis was, might well be regarded as eccentric, to say the least. His language would, no doubt, seem the stranger because he so rarely spoke. He would say, "That man does not dwell in my heaven," where any one else would have said, "We are not made on the same pattern." Every clever man has his own quirks of speech. The broader his genius, the more conspicuous are the singularities which constitute the various degrees of eccentricity. In the country an eccentric man is at once set down as half mad.

Hence Monsieur Lefebvre's first sentences left me doubtful of my schoolmate's insanity. I listened to the old man, but I criticised his statements.

The most serious symptom had supervened a day or two before the marriage. Louis had had some well-marked attacks of catalepsy. He had once remained motionless for fifty-nine hours, his eyes staring, neither speaking nor eating; a purely nervous affection, to which persons under the influence of violent passion are liable; a rare malady, but perfectly well known to the medical faculty. What was really extraordinary was that Louis should not have had several previous attacks, since his habits of rapt thought and the character of his mind would predispose him to them. But his temperament, physical and mental, was so admirably balanced, that it had no doubt been able to resist the demands on his strength. The excitement to which he had been wound up by the anticipation of acute physical enjoyment, enhanced by a chaste life and a highly-strung soul, had no doubt led to these attacks, of which the results are as little known as the cause.

The letters that have by chance escaped destruction show very plainly a transition from pure idealism to the most intense sensualism.

Time was when Lambert and I had admired this phenomenon of the human mind, in which he saw the fortuitous separation of our two natures, and the signs of a total removal of the inner man, using its unknown faculties under the operation of an unknown cause. This disorder, a mystery as deep as that of sleep, was connected with the scheme of evidence which Lambert had set forth in his *Treatise on the Will*. And when Monsieur Lefebvre spoke to me of Louis' first attack, I suddenly remembered a conversation we had had on the subject after reading a medical book.

"Deep meditation and rapt ecstasy are perhaps the undeveloped germs of catalepsy," he said in conclusion.

On the occasion when he so concisely formulated this idea, he had been trying to link mental phenomena together by a

series of results, following the processes of the intellect step by step, from their beginnings as those simple, purely animal impulses of instinct, which are all-sufficient to many human beings, particularly to those men whose energies are wholly spent in mere mechanical labor; then, going on to the aggregation of ideas and rising to comparison, reflection, meditation, and finally ecstasy and catalepsy. Lambert, of course, in the artlessness of youth, imagined that he had laid down the lines of a great work when he thus built up a scale of the various degrees of man's mental powers.

I remember that, by one of those chances which seem like predestination, we got hold of a great Martyrology, in which the most curious narratives are given of the total abeyance of physical life which a man can attain to under the paroxysms of the inner life. By reflecting on the effects of fanaticism, Lambert was led to believe that the collected ideas to which we give the name of feelings may very possibly be the material outcome of some fluid which is generated in all men, more or less abundantly, according to the way in which their organs absorb, from the medium in which they live, the elementary atoms that produce it. We went crazy over catalepsy; and with the eagerness that boys throw into every pursuit, we endeavored to endure pain by thinking of something else. We exhausted ourselves by making experiments not unlike those of the epileptic fanatics of the last century, a religious mania which will some day be of service to the science of humanity. I would stand on Lambert's chest, remaining there several minutes without giving him the slightest pain; but notwithstanding these crazy attempts, we did not achieve an attack of catalepsy.

This digression seemed necessary to account for my first doubts, which were, however, completely dispelled by Monsieur Lefebvre.

"When this attack had passed off," said he, "my nephew sank into a state of extreme terror, a dejection that nothing could overcome. He thought himself unfit for marriage. I watched him with the care of a mother for her child, and

found him preparing to perform on himself the operation to which Origen believed he owed his talents. I at once carried him off to Paris, and placed him under the care of Monsieur Esquirol. All through our journey Louis sat sunk in almost unbroken torpor, and did not recognize me. The Paris physicians pronounced him incurable, and unanimously advised his being left in perfect solitude, with nothing to break the silence that was needful for his very improbable recovery, and that he should live always in a cool room with a subdued light.—Mademoiselle de Villenoix, whom I had been careful not to apprise of Louis' state," he went on, blinking his eyes, "but who was supposed to have broken off the match, went to Paris and heard what the doctors had pronounced. She immediately begged to see my nephew, who hardly recognized her; then, like the noble soul she is, she insisted on devoting herself to giving him such care as might tend to his recovery. She would have been obliged to do so if he had been her husband, she said, and could she do less for him as her lover?

"She removed Louis to Villenoix, where they have been living for two years."

So, instead of continuing my journey, I stopped at Blois to go to see Louis. Good Monsieur Lefebvre would not hear of my lodging anywhere but at his house, where he showed me his nephew's room with the books and all else that had belonged to him. At every turn the old man could not suppress some mournful exclamation, showing what hopes Louis' precocious genius had raised, and the terrible grief into which this irreparable ruin had plunged him.

"That young fellow knew everything, my dear sir!" said he, laying on the table a volume containing Spinoza's works. "How could so well organized a brain go astray?"

"Indeed, monsieur," said I, "was it not perhaps the result of its being so highly organized? If he really is a victim to the malady as yet unstudied in all its aspects, which is known simply as madness, I am inclined to attribute it to his passion. His studies and his mode of life had strung his

powers and faculties to a degree of energy beyond which the least further strain was too much for nature; Love was enough to crack them, or to raise them to a new form of expression which we are maligning perhaps, by ticketing it without due knowledge. In fact, he may perhaps have regarded the joys of marriage as an obstacle to the perfection of his inner man and his flight towards spiritual spheres."

"My dear sir," said the old man, after listening to me with attention, "your reasoning is, no doubt, very sound; but even if I could follow it, would this melancholy logic comfort me for the loss of my nephew?"

Lambert's uncle was one of those men who live only by their affections.

I went to Villenoix on the following day. The kind old man accompanied me to the gates of Blois. When we were out on the road to Villenoix, he stopped me and said:

"As you may suppose, I do not go there. But do not forget what I have said; and in Mademoiselle de Villenoix's presence affect not to perceive that Louis is mad."

He remained standing on the spot where I left him, watching me till I was out of sight.

I made my way to the château of Villenoix, not without deep agitation. My thoughts were many at each step on this road, which Louis had so often trodden with a heart full of hopes, a soul spurred on by the myriad darts of love. The shrubs, the trees, the turns of the winding road where little gullies broke the banks on each side, were to me full of strange interest. I tried to enter into the impressions and thoughts of my unhappy friend. Those evening meetings on the edge of the coombe, where his lady-love had been wont to find him, had, no doubt, initiated Mademoiselle de Villenoix into the secrets of that vast and lofty spirit, as I had learned them all some years before.

But the thing that most occupied my mind, and gave to my pilgrimage the interest of intense curiosity, in addition to the almost pious feelings that led me onwards, was that

glorious faith of Mademoiselle de Villenoix's which the good priest had told me of. Had she in the course of time been infected with her lover's madness, or had she so completely entered into his soul that she could understand all its thoughts, even the most perplexed? I lost myself in the wonderful problem of feeling, passing the highest inspirations of passion and the most beautiful instances of self-sacrifice. That one should die for the other is an almost vulgar form of devotion. To live faithful to one love is a form of heroism that immortalized Mademoiselle Dupuis. When the great Napoleon and Lord Byron could find successors in the hearts of women they had loved, we may well admire Bolingbroke's widow; but Mademoiselle Dupuis could feed on the memories of many years of happiness, whereas Mademoiselle de Villenoix, having known nothing of love but its first excitement, seemed to me to typify love in its highest expression. If she were herself almost crazy, it was splendid; but if she had understood and entered into his madness, she combined with the beauty of a noble heart a crowning effort of passion worthy to be studied and honored.

When I saw the tall turrets of the château, remembering how often poor Lambert must have thrilled at the sight of them, my heart beat anxiously. As I recalled the events of our boyhood, I was almost a sharer in his present life and situation. At last I reached a wide, deserted courtyard, and I went into the hall of the house without meeting a soul. There the sound of my steps brought out an old woman, to whom I gave a letter written to Mademoiselle de Villenoix by Monsieur Lefebvre. In a few minutes this woman returned to bid me enter, and led me to a low room, floored with black-and-white marble; the Venetian shutters were closed, and at the end of the room I dimly saw Louis Lambert.

"Be seated, monsieur," said a gentle voice that went to my heart.

Mademoiselle de Villenoix was at my side before I was aware of her presence, and noiselessly brought me a chair,

which at first I would not accept. It was so dark that at first I saw Mademoiselle de Villenoix and Lambert only as two black masses perceived against the gloomy background. I presently sat down under the influence of the feeling that comes over us, almost in spite of ourselves, under the obscure vault of a church. My eyes, full of the bright sunshine, accustomed themselves gradually to this artificial night.

"Monsieur is your old school-friend," she said to Louis.

He made no reply. At last I could see him, and it was one of those spectacles that are stamped on the memory for ever. He was standing, his elbows resting on the cornice of the low wainscot, which threw his body forward, so that it seemed bowed under the weight of his bent head. His hair was as long as a woman's, falling over his shoulders and hanging about his face, giving him a resemblance to the busts of the great men of the time of Louis XIV. His face was perfectly white. He constantly rubbed one leg against the other, with a mechanical action that nothing could have checked, and the incessant friction of the bones made a doleful sound. Near him was a bed of moss on boards.

"He very rarely lies down," said Mademoiselle de Villenoix; "but whenever he does, he sleeps for several days."

Louis stood, as I beheld him, day and night with a fixed gaze, never winking his eyelids as we do. Having asked Mademoiselle de Villenoix whether a little more light would hurt our friend, on her reply I opened the shutters a little way, and could see the expression of Lambert's countenance. Alas! he was wrinkled, white-headed, his eyes dull and lifeless as those of the blind. His features seemed all drawn upwards to the top of his head. I made several attempts to talk to him, but he did not hear me. He was a wreck snatched from the grave, a conquest of life from death—or of death from life!

I stayed for about an hour, sunk in unaccountable dreams, and lost in painful thought. I listened to Mademoiselle de Villenoix, who told me every detail of this life—that of a child in arms.

Suddenly Louis ceased rubbing his legs together, and said slowly:

"The angels are white."

I cannot express the effect produced upon me by this utterance, by the sound of the voice I had loved, whose accents, so painfully expected, had seemed to be lost for ever. My eyes filled with tears in spite of every effort. An involuntary instinct warned me, making me doubt whether Louis had really lost his reason. I was indeed well assured that he neither saw nor heard me; but the sweetness of his tone, which seemed to reveal heavenly happiness, gave his speech an amazing effect. These words, the incomplete revelation of an unknown world, rang in our souls like some glorious distant bells in the depth of a dark night. I was no longer surprised that Mademoiselle de Villenoix considered Lambert to be perfectly sane. The life of the soul had perhaps subdued that of the body. His faithful companion had, no doubt—as I had at that moment—intuitions of that melodious and beautiful existence to which we give the name of Heaven in its highest meaning.

This woman, this angel, always was with him, seated at her embroidery frame; and each time she drew the needle out she gazed at Lambert with sad and tender feeling. Unable to endure this terrible sight—for I could not, like Mademoiselle de Villenoix, read all his secrets—I went out, and she came with me to walk for a few minutes and talk of herself and of Lambert.

"Louis must, no doubt, appear to be mad," said she. "But he is not, if the term mad ought only to be used in speaking of those whose brain is for some unknown cause diseased, and who can show no reason in their actions. Everything in my husband is perfectly balanced. Though he did not actively recognize you, it is not that he did not see you. He has succeeded in detaching himself from his body, and discerns us under some other aspect—what that is, I know not. When he speaks, he utters wondrous things. Only it often happens that he concludes in speech an idea that had its

beginning in his mind; or he may begin a sentence and finish it in thought. To other men he seems insane; to me, living as I do in his mind, his ideas are quite lucid. I follow the road his spirit travels; and though I do not know every turning, I can reach the goal with him.

"Which of us has not often known what it is to think of some futile thing and be led on to some serious reflection through the ideas or memories it brings in its train? Not unfrequently, after speaking about some trifle, the simple starting-point of a rapid train of reflections, a thinker may forget or be silent as to the abstract connection of ideas leading to his conclusion, and speak again only to utter the last link in the chain of his meditations.

"Inferior minds, to whom this swift mental vision is a thing unknown, who are ignorant of the spirit's inner workings, laugh at the dreamer; and if he is subject to this kind of obliviousness, regard him as a madman. Louis is always in this state; he soars perpetually through the spaces of thought, traversing them with the swiftness of a swallow; I can follow him in his flight. This is the whole history of his madness. Some day, perhaps, Louis will come back to the life in which we vegetate; but if he breathes the air of heaven before the time when we may be permitted to do so, why should we desire to have him down among us? I am content to hear his heart beat, and all my happiness is to be with him. Is he not wholly mine? In three years, twice at intervals he was himself for a few days; once in Switzerland, where we went, and once in an island off the wilds of Brittany, where we took some sea-baths. I have twice been very happy! I can live on memory."

"But do you write down the things he says?" I asked.

"Why should I?" said she.

I was silent; human knowledge was indeed as nothing in this woman's eyes.

"At those times, when he talked a little," she added, "I think I have recorded some of his phrases, but I left it off; I did not understand him then."

I asked her for them by a look; she understood me. This is what I have been able to preserve from oblivion.

I

Everything here on earth is produced by an ethereal substance which is the common element of various phenomena, known inaccurately as electricity, heat, light, the galvanic fluid, the magnetic fluid, and so forth. The universal distribution of this substance, under various forms, constitutes what is commonly known as Matter.

II

The brain is the alembic to which the Animal conveys what each of its organizations, in proportion to the strength of that vessel, can absorb of that Substance, which returns it transformed into Will.

The Will is a fluid inherent in every creature endowed with motion. Hence the innumerable forms assumed by the Animal, the results of its combinations with that Substance. The Animal's instincts are the product of the coercion of the environment in which it develops. Hence its variety.

III

In Man the Will becomes a power peculiar to him, and exceeding in intensity that of any other species.

IV

By constant assimilation, the Will depends on the Substance it meets with again and again in all its transmutations, pervading them by Thought, which is a product peculiar to the human Will, in combination with the modifications of that Substance.

V

The innumerable forms assumed by Thought are the result of the greater or less perfection of the human mechanism.

VI

The Will acts through organs commonly called the five senses, which, in fact, are but one—the faculty of Sight. Feeling and tasting, hearing and smelling, are Sight modified to the transformations of the Substance which Man can absorb in two conditions: untransformed and transformed.

VII

Everything of which the form comes within the cognizance of the one sense of Sight may be reduced to certain simple bodies of which the elements exist in the air, the light, or in the elements of air and light. Sound is a condition of the air; colors are all conditions of light; every smell is a combination of air and light; hence the four aspects of Matter with regard to Man—sound, color, smell, and shape—have the same origin, for the day is not far off when the relationship of the phenomena of air and light will be made clear.

Thought, which is allied to Light, is expressed in words which depend on sound. To man, then, everything is derived from the Substance, whose transformations vary only through Number—a certain quantitative dissimilarity, the proportions resulting in the individuals or objects of what are classed as Kingdoms.

VIII

When the Substance is absorbed in sufficient number (or quantity) it makes of man an immensely powerful mechanism, in direct communication with the very element of the

Substance, and acting on organic nature in the same way as a large stream when it absorbs the smaller brooks. Volition sets this force in motion independently of the Mind. By its concentration it acquires some of the qualities of the Substance, such as the swiftness of light, the penetrating power of electricity, and the faculty of saturating a body; to which must be added that it apprehends what it can do.

Still, there is in man a primordial and overruling phenomenon which defies analysis. Man may be dissected completely; the elements of Will and Mind may perhaps be found; but there still will remain beyond apprehension the *x* against which I once used to struggle. That *x* is the Word, the Logos, whose communication burns and consumes those who are not prepared to receive it. The Word is for ever generating the Substance.

IX

Rage, like all our vehement demonstrations, is a current of the human force that acts electrically; its turmoil when liberated acts on persons who are present even though they be neither its cause nor its object. Are there not certain men who by a discharge of Volition can sublimate the essence of the feelings of the masses?

X

Fanaticism and all emotions are living forces. These forces in some beings become rivers that gather in and sweep away everything.

XI

Though Space *is*, certain faculties have the power of traversing it with such rapidity that it is as though it existed not. From your own bed to the frontiers of the universe there are but two steps: Will and Faith.

XII

Facts are nothing; they do not subsist; all that lives of us is the Idea.

XIII

The realm of Ideas is divided into three spheres: that of Instinct, that of Abstractions, that of Specialism.

XIV

The greater part, the weaker part of visible humanity, dwells in the Sphere of Instinct. The *Instinctives* are born, labor, and die without rising to the second degree of human intelligence, namely, Abstraction.

XV

Society begins in the sphere of Abstraction. If Abstraction, as compared with Instinct, is an almost divine power, it is nevertheless incredibly weak as compared with the gift of Specialism, which is the formula of God. Abstraction comprises all nature in a germ, more virtually than a seed contains the whole system of a plant and its fruits. From Abstraction are derived laws, arts, social ideas, and interests. It is the glory and the scourge of the earth: its glory because it has created social life; its scourge because it allows man to evade entering into Specialism, which is one of the paths to the Infinite. Man measures everything by Abstractions: Good and Evil, Virtue and Crime. Its formula of equity is a pair of scales, its justice is blind. God's justice sees: there is all the difference.

There must be intermediate Beings, then, dividing the sphere of Instinct from the sphere of Abstractions, in whom the two elements mingle in an infinite variety of proportions. Some have more of one, some more of the other. And there

are also some in which the two powers neutralize each other by equality of effect.

XVI

Specialism consists in seeing the things of the material universe and the things of the spiritual universe in all their ramifications original and causative. The greatest human geniuses are those who started from the darkness of Abstraction to attain to the light of Specialism. (Specialism, *species,* sight; speculation, or seeing everything, and all at once; *Speculum,* a mirror or means of apprehending a thing by seeing the whole of it.) Jesus had the gift of Specialism; He saw each fact in its root and in its results, in the past where it had its rise, and in the future where it would grow and spread; His sight pierced into the understanding of others. The perfection of the inner eye gives rise to the gift of Specialism. Specialism brings with it Intuition. Intuition is one of the faculties of the Inner Man, of which Specialism is an attribute. Intuition acts by an imperceptible sensation of which he who obeys it is not conscious: for instance, Napoleon instinctively moving from a spot struck immediately afterwards by a cannon ball.

XVII

Between the sphere of Abstraction and that of Specialism, as between those of Abstraction and Instinct, there are beings in whom the attributes of both combine and produce a mixture; these are men of genius.

XVIII

Specialism is necessarily the most perfect expression of man, and he is the link binding the visible world to the higher worlds; he acts, sees, and feels by his inner powers. The man of Abstraction thinks. The man of Instinct acts

XIX

Hence man has three degrees. That of Instinct, below the average; that of Abstraction, the general average; that of Specialism, above the average. Specialism opens to man his true career; the Infinite dawns on him; he sees what his destiny must be.

XX

There are three worlds—the Natural, the Spiritual, and the Divine. Humanity passes through the Natural world, which is not fixed either in its essence or its faculties. The Spiritual world is fixed in its essence and unfixed in its faculties. The Divine world is fixed in its faculties and its essence both. Hence there is necessarily a Material worship, a Spiritual worship, and a Divine worship: three forms expressed in action, speech, and prayer, or, in other words, in deed, apprehension, and love. Instinct demands deed; Abstraction is concerned with Ideas; Specialism sees the end, it aspires to God with presentiment or contemplation.

XXI

Hence, perhaps, some day the converse of *Et Verbum caro factum est* will become the epitome of a new Gospel, which will proclaim that The Flesh shall be made the Word and become the Utterance of God.

XXII

The Resurrection is the work of the Wind of Heaven sweeping over the worlds. The angel borne on the Wind does not say: "Arise, ye dead"; he says, "Arise, ye who live!"

Such are the meditations which I have with great difficulty cast in a form adapted to our understanding. There are some others which Pauline remembered more exactly, where-

fore I know not, and which I wrote from her dictation; but they drive the mind to despair when, knowing in what an intellect they originated, we strive to understand them. I will quote a few of them to complete my study of this figure; partly, too, perhaps, because, in these last aphorisms, Lambert's formulas seem to include a larger universe than the former set, which would apply only to zoological evolution. Still, there is a relation between the two fragments, evident to those persons—though they be but few—who love to dive into such intellectual deeps.

I

Everything on earth exists solely by motion and number.

II

Motion is, so to speak, number in action.

III

Motion is the product of a force generated by the Word and by Resistance, which is Matter. But for Resistance, Motion would have had no results; its action would have been infinite. Newton's gravitation is not a law, but an effect of the general law of universal motion.

IV

Motion, acting in proportion to Resistance, produces a result which is Life. As soon as one or the other is the stronger, Life ceases.

V

No portion of Motion is wasted; it always produces number; still, it can be neutralized by disproportionate resistance, as in minerals.

VI

Number, which produces variety of all kinds, also gives rise to Harmony, which, in the highest meaning of the word, is the relation of parts to the whole.

VII

But for Motion, everything would be one and the same. Its products, identical in their essence, differ only by Number, which gives rise to faculties.

VIII

Man looks to faculties; angels look to the Essence.

IX

By giving his body up to elemental action, man can achieve an inner union with the Light.

X

Number is intellectual evidence belonging to man alone; by it he acquires knowledge of the Word.

XI

There is a Number beyond which the impure cannot pass: the Number which is the limit of creation.

XII

The Unit was the starting-point of every product: compounds are derived from it, but the end must be identical with the beginning. Hence this Spiritual formula: the compound Unit, the variable Unit, the fixed Unit.

XIII

The Universe is the Unit in variety. Motion is the means; Number is the result. The end is the return of all things to the Unit, which is God.

XIV

Three and Seven are the two chief Spiritual numbers.

XV

Three is the formula of created worlds. It is the Spiritual Sign of the creation, as it is the Material Sign of dimension. In fact, God has worked by curved lines only: the Straight Line is an attribute of the Infinite; and man, who has the presentiment of the Infinite, reproduces it in his works. Two is the number of generation. Three is the number of Life which includes generation and offspring. Add the sum of four, and you have Seven, the formula of Heaven. Above all is God; He is the Unit.

After going in to see Louis once more, I took leave of his wife and went home, lost in ideas so adverse to social life that, in spite of a promise to return to Villenoix, I did not go.

The sight of Louis had had some mysteriously sinister influence over me. I was afraid to place myself again in that heavy atmosphere, where ecstasy was contagious. Any man would have felt, as I did, a longing to throw himself into the infinite, just as one soldier after another killed himself in a certain sentry box where one had committed suicide in the camp at Boulogne. It is a known fact that Napoleon was obliged to have the hut burned which had harbored an idea that had become a mortal infection.

Louis' room had perhaps the same fatal effect as that sentry box.

These two facts would then be additional evidence in favor

of his theory of the transfusion of Will. I was conscious of strange disturbances, transcending the most fantastic results of taking tea, coffee, or opium, of dreams or of fever—mysterious agents, whose terrible action often sets our brains on fire.

I ought perhaps to have made a separate book of these fragments of thought, intelligible only to certain spirits who have been accustomed to lean over the edge of abysses in the hope of seeing to the bottom. The life of that mighty brain, which split up on every side perhaps, like a too vast empire, would have been set forth in the narrative of this man's visions—a being incomplete for lack of force or of weakness; but I preferred to give an account of my own impressions rather than to compose a more or less poetical romance.

Louis Lambert died at the age of twenty-eight, September 25, 1824, in his true love's arms. He was buried by her desire in an island in the park at Villenoix. His tombstone is a plain stone cross, without name or date. Like a flower that has blossomed on the margin of a precipice, and drops into it, its colors and fragrance all unknown, it was fitting that he too should fall. Like many another misprized soul, he had often yearned to dive haughtily into the void, and abandon there the secrets of his own life.

Mademoiselle de Villenoix would, however, have been quite justified in recording his name on that cross with her own. Since her partner's death, reunion has been her constant, hourly hope. But the vanities of woe are foreign to faithful souls.

Villenoix is falling into ruin. She no longer resides there; to the end, no doubt, that she may the better picture herself there as she used to be. She had said long ago:

"His heart was mine; his genius is with God."

Château de Saché. *June–July* 1832.

THE EXILES

ALMAE SORORI

In the year 1308 few houses were yet standing on the Island formed by the alluvium and sand deposited by the Seine above the Cité, behind the Church of Notre-Dame. The first man who was so bold as to build on this strand, then liable to frequent floods, was a constable of the watch of the City of Paris, who had been able to do some service to their Reverences the Chapter of the Cathedral; and in return the Bishop leased him twenty-five perches of land, with exemption from all feudal dues or taxes on the buildings he might erect.

Seven years before the beginning of this narrative, Joseph Tirechair, one of the sternest of Paris constables, as his name [Tear Flesh] would indicate, had, thanks to his share of the fines collected by him for delinquencies committed within the precincts of the Cité, been able to build a house on the bank of the Seine just at the end of the Rue du Port-Saint-Landry. To protect the merchandise landed on the strand, the municipality had constructed a sort of breakwater of masonry, which may still be seen on some old plans of Paris, and which preserved the piles of the landing-place by meeting the rush of water and ice at the upper end of the Island. The constable had taken advantage of this for the foundation of his house, so that there were several steps up to his door.

Like all the houses of that date, this cottage was crowned by a peaked roof, forming a gable-end to the front, or half a diamond. To the great regret of historians, but two or three examples of such roofs survive in Paris. A round opening gave light to a loft, where the constable's wife dried

the linen of the Chapter, for she had the honor of washing for the Cathedral—which was certainly not a bad customer. On the first floor were two rooms, let to lodgers at a rent, one year with another, of forty sous *Parisis* each, an exorbitant sum, that was however justified by the luxury Tirechair had lavished on their adornment. Flanders tapestry hung on the walls, and a large bed with a top valance of green serge, like a peasant's bed, was amply furnished with mattresses, and covered with good sheets of fine linen. Each room had a stove called a *chauffe-doux;* the floor, carefully polished by Dame Tirechair's apprentices, shone like the woodwork of a shrine. Instead of stools, the lodgers had deep chairs of carved walnut, the spoils probably of some raided castle. Two chests with pewter mouldings, and tables on twisted legs, completed the fittings, worthy of the most fastidious knights-banneret whom business might bring to Paris.

The windows of those two rooms looked out on the river. From one you could only see the shores of the Seine, and the three barren islands, of which two were subsequently joined together to form the Ile Saint-Louis; the third was the Ile de Louviers. From the other could be seen, down a vista of the Port-Saint-Landry, the buildings on the Grève, the Bridge of Notre-Dame, with its houses, and the tall towers of the Louvre, but lately built by Philippe-Auguste to overlook the then poor and squalid town of Paris, which suggests so many imaginary marvels to the fancy of modern romancers.

The ground floor of Tirechair's house consisted of a large hall, where his wife's business was carried on, through which the lodgers were obliged to pass on their way to their own rooms up a stairway like a mill-ladder. Behind this were a kitchen and a bedroom, with a view over the Seine. A tiny garden, reclaimed from the waters, displayed at the foot of this modest dwelling its beds of cabbages and onions, and a few rose-bushes, sheltered by palings, forming a sort of hedge. A little structure of lath and mud served as a kennel for a big dog, the indispensable guardian of so lonely a dwelling.

Beyond this kennel was a little plot, where the hens cackled whose eggs were sold to the Canons. Here and there on this patch of earth, muddy or dry according to the whimsical Parisian weather, a few trees grew, constantly lashed by the wind, and teased and broken by the passer-by—willows, reeds, and tall grasses.

The Eyot, the Seine, the landing-place, the house, were all overshadowed on the west by the huge basilica of Notre-Dame casting its cold gloom over the whole plot as the sun moved. Then, as now, there was not in all Paris a more deserted spot, a more solemn or more melancholy prospect. The noise of waters, the chanting of priests, or the piping of the wind, were the only sounds that disturbed this wilderness, where lovers would sometimes meet to discuss their secrets when the church-folks and clergy were safe in church at the services.

One evening in April in the year 1308, Tirechair came home in a remarkably bad temper. For three days past everything had been in good order on the King's highway. Now, as an officer of the peace, nothing annoyed him so much as to feel himself useless. He flung down his halbert in a rage, muttered inarticulate words as he pulled off his doublet, half red and half blue, and slipped on a shabby camlet jerkin. After helping himself from the bread-box to a hunch of bread, and spreading it with butter, he seated himself on a bench, looked round at his four whitewashed walls, counted the beams of the ceiling, made a mental inventory of the household goods hanging from the nails, scowled at the neatness which left him nothing to complain of, and looked at his wife, who said not a word as she ironed the albs and surplices from the sacristy.

"By my halidom," he said, to open the conversation, "I cannot think, Jacqueline, where you go to catch your apprenticed maids. Now, here is one," he went on, pointing to a girl who was folding an altar-cloth, clumsily enough, it must be owned, "who looks to me more like a damsel rather free of her person than a sturdy country wench. Her hands are as

white as a fine lady's! By the Mass! and her hair smells of essences, I verily believe, and her hose are as fine as a queen's. By the two horns of Old Nick, matters please me but ill as I find them here."

The girl colored, and stole a look at Jacqueline, full of alarm not unmixed with pride. The mistress answered her glance with a smile, laid down her work, and turned to her husband.

"Come now," said she, in a sharp tone, "you need not harry me. Are you going to accuse me next of some underhand tricks? Patrol your roads as much as you please, but do not meddle here with anything but what concerns your sleeping in peace, drinking your wine, and eating what I set before you, or else, I warn you, I will have no more to do with keeping you healthy and happy. Let any one find me a happier man in all the town," she went on, with a scolding grimace. "He has silver in his purse, a gable over the Seine, a stout halbert on one hand, an honest wife on the other, a house as clean and smart as a new pin! And he growls like a pilgrim smarting from Saint Anthony's fire!"

"Hey day!" exclaimed the sergeant of the watch, "do you fancy, Jacqueline, that I have any wish to see my house razed down, my halbert given to another, and my wife standing in the pillory?"

Jacqueline and the dainty journeywoman turned pale.

"Just tell me what you are driving at," said the washerwoman sharply, "and make a clean breast of it. For some days, my man, I have observed that you have some maggot twisting in your poor brain. Come up, then, and have it all out. You must be a pretty coward indeed if you fear any harm when you have only to guard the common council and live under the protection of the Chapter! Their Reverences the Canons would lay the whole bishopric under an interdict if Jacqueline brought a complaint of the smallest damage."

As she spoke, she went straight up to her husband and took him by the arm.

"Come with me," she added, pulling him up and out on to the steps.

When they were down by the water in their little garden, Jacqueline looked saucily in her husband's face.

"I would have you to know, you old gaby, that when my lady fair goes out, a piece of gold comes into our savings-box."

"Oh, ho!" said the constable, who stood silent and meditative before his wife. But he presently said, "Any way, we are done for.—What brings the dame to our house?"

"She comes to see the well-favored young clerk who lives overhead," replied Jacqueline, looking up at the window that opened on to the vast landscape of the Seine valley.

"The Devil's in it!" cried the man. "For a few base crowns you have ruined me, Jacqueline. Is that an honest trade for a sergeant's decent wife to ply? And, be she Countess or Baroness, the lady will not be able to get us out of the trap in which we shall find ourselves caught sooner or later. Shall we not have to square accounts with some puissant and offended husband? for, by the Mass, she is fair to look upon!"

"But she is a widow, I tell you, gray gander! How dare you accuse your wife of foul play and folly? And the lady has never spoken a word to yon gentle clerk; she is content to look on him and think of him. Poor lad! he would be dead of starvation by now but for her, for she is as good as a mother to him. And he, the sweet cherub! it is as easy to cheat him as to rock a new-born babe. He believes his pence will last for ever, and he has eaten them through twice over in the past six months."

"Woman," said the sergeant, solemnly pointing to the Place de Grève, "do you remember seeing, even from this spot, the fire in which they burnt the Danish woman the other day?"

"What then?" said Jacqueline, in a fright.

"What then?" echoed Tirechair. "Why, the two men who lodge with us smell of scorching. Neither Chapter nor Countess nor Protector can serve them. Here is Easter come round; the year is ending; we must turn our company out of doors, and that at once. Do you think you can teach

an old constable how to know a gallows-bird? Our two lodgers were on terms with la Porette, that heretic jade from Denmark or Norway, whose last cries you heard from here. She was a brave witch; she never blenched at the stake, which was proof enough of her compact with the Devil. I saw her as plain as I see you; she preached to the throng, and declared she was in heaven and could see God.

"And since that, I tell you, I have never slept quietly in my bed. My lord, who lodges over us, is of a surety more of a wizard than a Christian. On my word as an officer, I shiver when that old man passes near me; he never sleeps of nights; if I wake, his voice is ringing like a bourdon of bells, and I hear him uttering incantations in the language of hell. Have you ever seen him eat an honest crust of bread or a hearth-cake made by a good Catholic baker? His brown skin has been scorched and tanned by hell-fires. Marry, and I tell you his eyes hold a spell like those of serpents. Jacqueline, I will have none of those two men under my roof. I see too much of the law not to know that it is well to have nothing to do with it.—You must get rid of our two lodgers; the elder, because I suspect him; the youngster, because he is too pretty. They neither of them seem to me to keep Christian company. The boy is ever staring at the moon, the stars, and the clouds, like a wizard watching for the hour when he shall mount his broomstick; the other old rogue certainly makes some use of the poor boy for his black art. My house stands too close to the river as it is, and that risk of ruin is bad enough without bringing down fire from heaven, or the love affairs of a countess. I have spoken. Do not rebel."

In spite of her sway in the house, Jacqueline stood stupefied as she listened to the edict fulminated against his lodgers by the sergeant of the watch. She mechanically looked up at the window of the room inhabited by the old man, and shivered with horror as she suddenly caught sight of the gloomy, melancholy face, and the piercing eye that so affected her husband, accustomed as he was to dealing with criminals.

At that period, great and small, priests and laymen, all

trembled before the idea of any supernatural power. The word "magic" was as powerful as leprosy to root up feelings, break social ties, and freeze piety in the most generous soul. It suddenly struck the constable's wife that she never, in fact, had seen either of her lodgers exercising any human function. Though the younger man's voice was as sweet and melodious as the tones of a flute, she so rarely heard it that she was tempted to think his silence the result of a spell. As she recalled the strange beauty of that pink-and-white face, and saw in memory the fine fair hair and moist brilliancy of those eyes, she believed they were indeed the artifices of the Devil. She remembered that for days at a time she had never heard the slightest sound from either room. Where were the strangers during all those hours?

Suddenly the most singular circumstances recurred to her mind. She was completely overmastered by fear, and could even discern witchcraft in the rich lady's interest in this young Godefroid, a poor orphan who had come from Flanders to study at the University of Paris. She hastily put her hand into one of her pockets, pulled out four livres of Tournay in large silver coinage, and looked at the pieces with an expression of avarice mingled with terror.

"That, at any rate, is not false coin," said she, showing the silver to her husband. "Besides," she went on, "how can I turn them out after taking next year's rent paid in advance?"

"You had better inquire of the Dean of the Chapter," replied Tirechair. "Is not it his business to tell us how we should deal with these extraordinary persons?"

"Ay, truly extraordinary," cried Jacqueline. "To think of their cunning; coming here under the very shadow of Notre-Dame! Still," she went on, "or ever I ask the Dean, why not warn that fair and noble lady of the risk she runs?"

As she spoke, Jacqueline went into the house with her husband, who had not missed a mouthful. Tirechair, as a man grown old in the tricks of his trade, affected to believe that the strange lady was in fact a work-girl; still, this as-

sumed indifference could not altogether cloak the timidity of a courtier who respects a royal incognito. At this moment six was striking by the clock of Saint-Denis du Pas, a small church that stood between Notre-Dame and the Port-Saint-Landry—the first church erected in Paris, on the very spot where Saint-Denis was laid on the gridiron, as chronicles tell. The hour flew from steeple to tower all over the city. Then suddenly confused shouts were heard on the left bank of the Seine, behind Notre-Dame, in the quarter where the schools of the University harbored their swarms.

At this signal, Jacqueline's elder lodger began to move about his room. The sergeant, his wife, and the strange lady listened while he opened and shut his door, and the old man's heavy step was heard on the steep stair. The constable's suspicions gave such interest to the advent of this personage, that the lady was startled as she observed the strange expression of the two countenances before her. Referring the terrors of this couple to the youth she was protecting—as was natural in a lover—the young lady awaited, with some uneasiness, the event thus heralded by the fears of her so-called master and mistress.

The old man paused for a moment on the threshold to scrutinize the three persons in the room, and seemed to be looking for his young companion. This glance of inquiry, unsuspicious as it was, agitated the three. Indeed, nobody, not even the stoutest man, could deny that Nature had bestowed exceptional powers on this being, who seemed almost supernatural. Though his eyes were somewhat deeply shaded by the wide sockets fringed with long eyebrows, they were set, like a kite's eyes, in eyelids so broad, and bordered by so dark a circle sharply defined on his cheek, that they seemed rather to be prominent. These singular eyes had in them something indescribably domineering and piercing, which took possession of the soul by a grave and thoughtful look, a look as bright and lucid as that of a serpent or a bird, but which held one fascinated and crushed by the swift communication of some tremendous sorrow, or of some superhuman power.

Every feature was in harmony with this eye of lead and of fire, at once rigid and flashing, stern and calm. While in this eagle eye earthly emotions seemed in some sort extinct, the lean, parched face also bore traces of unhappy passions and great deeds done. The nose, which was narrow and aquiline, was so long that it seemed to hang on by the nostrils. The bones of the face were strongly marked by the long, straight wrinkles that furrowed the hollow cheeks. Every line in the countenance looked dark. It would suggest the bed of a torrent where the violence of former floods was recorded in the depth of the water-courses, which testified to some terrible, unceasing turmoil. Like the ripples left by the oars of a boat on the waters, deep lines, starting from each side of his nose, marked his face strongly, and gave an expression of bitter sadness to his mouth, which was firm and straight-lipped. Above the storm thus stamped on his countenance, his calm brow rose with what may be called boldness, and crowned it as with a marble dome.

The stranger preserved that intrepid and dignified manner that is frequently habitual with men inured to disaster, and fitted by nature to stand unmoved before a furious mob and to face the greatest dangers. He seemed to move in a sphere apart, where he poised above humanity. His gestures, no less than his look, were full of irresistible power; his lean hands were those of a soldier; and if your own eyes were forced to fall before his piercing gaze, you were no less sure to tremble when by word or action he spoke to your soul. He moved in silent majesty that made him seem a king without his guard, a god without his rays.

His dress emphasized the ideas suggested by the peculiarities of his mien and face. Soul, body, and garb were in harmony, and calculated to impress the coldest imagination. He wore a sort of sleeveless gown of black cloth, fastened in front, and falling to the calf, leaving the neck bare with no collar. His doublet and boots were likewise black. On his head was a black velvet cap like a priest's, sitting in a close circle above his forehead, and not showing a single hair. It

was the strictest mourning, the gloomiest habit a man could wear. But for a long sword that hung by his side from a leather belt which could be seen where his surcoat hung open, a priest would have hailed him as a brother. Though of no more than middle height, he appeared tall; and, looking him in the face, he seemed a giant.

"The clock has struck, the boat is waiting; will you not come?"

At these words, spoken in bad French, but distinctly audible in the silence, a little noise was heard in the other top room, and the young man came down as lightly as a bird.

When Godefroid appeared, the lady's face turned crimson; she trembled, started, and covered her face with her white hands.

Any woman might have shared her agitation at the sight of this youth of about twenty, of a form and stature so slender that at a first glance he might have been taken for a mere boy, or a young girl in disguise. His black cap—like the *beret* worn by the Basque people—showed a brow as white as snow, where grace and innocence shone with an expression of divine sweetness—the light of a soul full of faith. A poet's fancy would have seen there the star which, in some old tale, a mother entreats the fairy godmother to set on the forehead of an infant abandoned, like Moses, to the waves. Love lurked in the thousand fair curls that fell over his shoulders. His throat, truly a swan's throat, was white and exquisitely round. His blue eyes, bright and liquid, mirrored the sky. His features and the mould of his brow were refined and delicate enough to enchant a painter. The bloom of beauty, which in a woman's face causes men such indescribable delight, the exquisite purity of outline, the halo of light that bathes the features we love, were here combined with a masculine complexion, and with strength as yet but half developed, in the most enchanting contrast. His was one of those melodious countenances which even when silent speak and attract us. And yet, on marking it attentively, the incipient blight might have been detected which comes of a

great thought or a passion, the faint yellow tinge that made him seem like a young leaf opening to the sun.

No contrast could be greater or more startling than that seen in the companionship of these two men. It was like seeing a frail and graceful shrub that has grown from the hollow trunk of some gnarled willow, withered by age, blasted by lightning, standing decrepit; one of those majestic trees that painters love; the trembling sapling takes shelter there from storms. One was a god, the other was an angel; one the poet that feels, the other the poet that expresses—a prophet in sorrow, a levite in prayer.

They went out together without speaking.

"Did you mark how he called him to him?" cried the sergeant of the watch when the footsteps of the couple were no longer audible on the strand. "Are not they a demon and his familiar?"

"Phooh!" puffed Jacqueline. "I felt smothered! I never marked our two lodgers so carefully. 'Tis a bad thing for us women that the Devil can wear so fair a mien!"

"Ay, cast some holy water on him," said Tirechair, "and you will see him turn into a toad.—I am off to tell the office all about them."

On hearing this speech, the lady roused herself from the reverie into which she had sunk, and looked at the constable, who was donning his red-and-blue jacket.

"Whither are you off to?" she asked.

"To tell the justices that wizards are lodging in our house very much against our will."

The lady smiled.

"I," said she, "am the Comtesse de Mahaut," and she rose with a dignity that took the man's breath away. "Beware of bringing the smallest trouble on your guests. Above all, respect the old man; I have seen him in the company of your Lord the King, who entreated him courteously; you will be ill advised to trouble him in any way. As to my having been here—never breathe a word of it, as you value your life."

She said no more, but relapsed into thought.

Presently she looked up, signed to Jacqueline, and together they went up into Godefroid's room. The fair Countess looked at the bed, the carved chairs, the chest, the tapestry, the table, with a joy like that of the exile who sees on his return the crowded roofs of his native town nestling at the foot of a hill.

"If you have not deceived me," she said to Jacqueline, "I promise you a hundred crowns in gold."

"Behold, madame," said the woman, "the poor angel is confiding—here is all his treasure."

As she spoke, Jacqueline opened a drawer in the table and showed some parchments.

"God of mercy!" cried the Countess, snatching up a document that caught her eye, on which she read, *Gothofredus Comes Gantiacus* (Godefroid, Count of Ghent).

She dropped the parchment, and passed her hand over her brow; then, feeling, no doubt, that she had compromised herself by showing so much emotion, she recovered her cold demeanor.

"I am satisfied," said she.

She went downstairs and out of the house. The constable and his wife stood in their doorway, and saw her take the path to the landing-place.

A boat was moored hard by. When the rustle of the Countess' approach was audible, a boatman suddenly stood up, helped the fair laundress to take her seat in it, and rowed with such strength as to make the boat fly like a swallow down the stream.

"You are a sorry fellow," said Jacqueline, giving the officer's shoulder a familiar slap. "We have earned a hundred gold crowns this morning."

"I like harboring lords no better than harboring wizards. And I know not, of the two, which is the more like to bring us to the gallows," replied Tirechair, taking up his halbert. "I will go my rounds over by Champfleuri; God protect us, and send me to meet some pert jade out in her bravery of gold rings to glitter in the shade like a glow-worm!"

Jacqueline, alone in the house, hastily went up to the unknown lord's room to discover, if she could, some clue to this mysterious business. Like some learned men who give themselves infinite pains to complicate the clear and simple laws of nature, she had already invented a chaotic romance to account for the meeting of these three persons under her humble roof. She hunted through the chest, examined everything, but could find nothing extraordinary. She saw nothing on the table but a writing-case and some sheets of parchment; and as she could not read, this discovery told her nothing. A woman's instinct then took her into the young man's room, and from thence she descried her two lodgers crossing the river in the ferry boat.

"They stand like two statues," said she to herself. "Ah, ha! They are landing at the Rue du Fouarre. How nimble he is, the sweet youth! He jumped out like a bird. By him the old man looks like some stone saint in the Cathedral.—They are going to the old School of the Four Nations. Presto! they are out of sight.—And this is where he lives, poor cherub!" she went on, looking about the room. "How smart and winning he is! Ah! your fine gentry are made of other stuff than we are."

And Jacqueline went down again after smoothing down the bed-coverlet, dusting the chest, and wondering for the hundredth time in six months:

"What in the world does he do all the blessed day? He cannot always be staring at the blue sky and the stars that God has hung up there like lanterns. That dear boy has known trouble. But why do he and the old man hardly ever speak to each other?"

Then she lost herself in wonderment and in thoughts which, in her woman's brain, were tangled like a skein of thread.

The old man and his young companion had gone into one of the schools for which the Rue du Fouarre was at that time famous throughout Europe. At the moment when Jacqueline's two lodgers arrived at the old School des Quatre

Nations, the celebrated Sigier, the most noted Doctor of Mystical Theology of the University of Paris, was mounting his pulpit in a spacious low room on a level with the street. The cold stones were strewn with clean straw, on which several of his disciples knelt on one knee, writing on the other, to enable them to take notes from the Master's improvised discourse, in the shorthand abbreviations which are the despair of modern decipherers.

The hall was full, not of students only, but of the most distinguished men belonging to the clergy, the court, and the legal faculty. There were some learned foreigners, too—soldiers and rich citizens. The broad faces were there, with prominent brows and venerable beards, which fill us with a sort of pious respect for our ancestors when we see their portraits from the Middle Ages. Lean faces, too, with burning, sunken eyes, under bald heads yellow from the labors of futile scholasticism, contrasted with young and eager countenances, grave faces, warlike faces, and the ruddy cheeks of the financial class.

These lectures, dissertations, theses, sustained by the brightest geniuses of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, roused our forefathers to enthusiasm. They were to them their bull-fights, their Italian opera, their tragedy, their dancers; in short, all their drama. The performance of Mysteries was a later thing than these spiritual disputations, to which, perhaps, we owe the French stage. Inspired eloquence, combining the attractions of the human voice skilfully used, with daring inquisition into the secrets of God, sufficed to satisfy every form of curiosity, appealed to the soul, and constituted the fashionable entertainment of the time. Not only did Theology include the other sciences, it was science itself, as grammar was science to the Ancient Greeks; and those who distinguished themselves in these duels, in which the orators, like Jacob, wrestled with the Spirit of God, had a promising future before them. Embassies, arbitrations between sovereigns, chancellorships, and ecclesiastical dignities were the meed of men whose rhetoric

had been schooled in theological controversy. The professor's chair was the tribune of the period.

This system lasted till the day when Rabelais gibbeted dialectics by his merciless satire, as Cervantes demolished chivalry by a narrative comedy.

To understand this amazing period and the spirit which dictated its voluminous, though now forgotten, masterpieces to analyze it, even to its barbarisms, we need only examine the Constitutions of the University of Paris and the extraordinary scheme of instruction that then obtained. Theology was taught under two faculties—that of Theology properly so called, and that of Canon Law. The faculty of Theology, again, had three sections—Scholastic, Canonical, and Mystic. It would be wearisome to give an account of the attributes of each section of the science, since one only, namely, Mystic, is the subject of this *Étude*.

Mystical Theology included the whole of Divine Revelation and the elucidation of the Mysteries. And this branch of ancient theology has been secretly preserved with reverence even to our own day; Jacob Bœhm, Swedenborg, Martinez Pasqualis, Saint-Martin, Molinos, Madame Guyon, Madame Bourignon, and Madame Krudener, the extensive sect of the Ecstatics, and that of the Illuminati, have at different periods duly treasured the doctrines of this science, of which the aim is indeed truly startling and portentous. In Doctor Sigier's day, as in our own, man has striven to gain wings to fly into the sanctuary where God hides from our gaze.

This digression was necessary to give a clue to the scene at which the old man and the youth from the island under Notre-Dame had come to be audience; it will also protect this narrative from all blame on the score of falsehood and hyperbole, of which certain persons of hasty judgment might perhaps suspect me.

Doctor Sigier was a tall man in the prime of life. His face, rescued from oblivion by the archives of the University, had singular analogies with that of Mirabeau. It was

stamped with the seal of fierce, swift, and terrible eloquence. But the Doctor bore on his brow the expression of religious faith that his modern double had not. His voice, too, was of persuasive sweetness, with a clear and pleasing ring in it.

At this moment the daylight, that was stintingly diffused through the small, heavily-leaded window-panes, tinted the assembly with capricious tones and powerful contrasts from the chequered light and shade. Here, in a dark corner, eyes shone brightly, their dark heads under the sunbeams gleamed light above faces in shadow, and various bald heads, with only a circlet of white hair, were distinguished among the crowd like battlements silvered by moonlight. Every face was turned towards the Doctor, mute but impatient. The drowsy voices of other lecturers in the adjoining schools were audible in the silent street like the murmuring of the sea; and the steps of the two strangers, as they now came in, attracted general attention. Doctor Sigier, ready to begin, saw the stately senior standing, looked round for a seat for him, and then finding none, as the place was full, came down from his place, went to the newcomer, and with great respect, led him to the platform of his professor's chair, and there gave him his stool to sit upon. The assembly hailed this mark of deference with a murmur of approval, recognizing the old man as the orator of a fine thesis admirably argued not long since at the Sorbonne.

The stranger looked down from his raised position on the crowd below with that deep glance that held a whole poem of sorrow, and those who met his eye felt an indescribable thrill. The lad, following the old man, sat down on one of the steps, leaning against the pulpit in a graceful and melancholy attitude. The silence was now profound, and the doorway and even the street were blocked by scholars who had deserted the other classes.

Doctor Sigier was to-day to recapitulate, in the last of a series of discourses, the views he had set forth in the former lectures on the Resurrection, Heaven, and Hell. His strange doctrine responded to the sympathies of the time, and grati-

fied the immoderate love of the marvelous, which haunts the mind of man in every age. This effort of man to clutch the infinite, which for ever slips through his ineffectual grasp, this last tourney of thought against thought, was a task worthy of an assembly where the brightest luminaries of the age had met, and where the most stupendous human imagination ever known, perhaps, at that moment shone.

The Doctor began by summing up in a mild and even tone the principal points he had so far established:

"No intellect was the exact counterpart of another. Had man any right to require an account of his Creator for the inequality of powers bestowed on each? Without attempting to penetrate rashly into the designs of God, ought we not to recognize the fact that by reason of their general diversity intelligences could be classed in spheres? From the sphere where the least degree of intelligence gleamed, to the most translucent souls who could see the road by which to ascend to God, was there not an ascending scale of spiritual gift? And did not spirits of the same sphere understand each other like brothers in soul, in flesh, in mind, and in feeling?"

From this the Doctor went on to unfold the most wonderful theories of sympathy. He set forth in Biblical language the phenomena of love, of instinctive repulsion, of strong affinities which transcend the laws of space, of the sudden mingling of souls which seem to recognize each other. With regard to the different degrees of strength of which our affections are capable, he accounted for them by the place, more or less near the centre, occupied by beings in their respective circles.

He gave mathematical expression to God's grand idea in the co-ordination of the various human spheres. "Through man," he said, "these spheres constituted a world intermediate between the intelligence of the brute and the intelligence of the angels." As he stated it, the divine Word nourishes the spiritual Word, the spiritual Word nourishes

the living Word, the living Word nourishes the animal Word, the animal Word nourishes the vegetable Word, and the vegetable Word is the expression of the life of the barren Word. These successive evolutions, as of a chrysalis, which God thus wrought in our souls, this infusorial life, so to speak, communicated from each zone to the next, more vivid, more spiritual, more perceptive in its ascent, represented, rather dimly no doubt, but marvelously enough to his inexperienced hearers, the impulse given to Nature by the Almighty. Supported by many texts from the Sacred Scriptures, which he used as a commentary on his own statements to express by concrete images the abstract arguments he felt to be wanting, he flourished the Spirit of God like a torch over the deep secrets of creation, with an eloquence peculiar to himself, and accents that urged conviction on his audience. As he unfolded his mysterious system and all its consequences, he gave a key to every symbol and justified the vocation, the special gifts, the genius, the talent of each human being.

Then, instinctively becoming physiological, he remarked on the resemblance to certain animals stamped on some human faces, accounting for them by primordial analogies and the upward tendency of all creation. He showed his audience the workings of Nature, and assigned a mission and a future to minerals, plants, and animals. Bible in hand, after thus spiritualizing Matter and materializing Spirit, after pointing to the Will of God in all things, and enjoining respect for His smallest works, he suggested the possibility of rising by faith from sphere to sphere.

This was the first portion of his discourse, and by adroit digressions he applied the doctrine of his system to feudalism. The poetry—religious and profane—and the abrupt eloquence of that period had a grand opening in this vast theory, wherein the Doctor had amalgamated all the philosophical systems of the ancients, and from which he brought them out again classified, transfigured, purified. The false dogmas of two adverse principles and of Pantheism were demolished

at his word, which proclaimed the Divine Unity, while ascribing to God and His angels the knowledge, the ends to which the means shone resplendent to the eyes of man. Fortified by the demonstrations that proved the existence of the world of Matter, Doctor Sigier constructed the scheme of a spiritual world dividing us from God by an ascending scale of spheres, just as the plant is divided from man by an infinite number of grades. He peopled the heavens, the stars, the planets, the sun.

Quoting Saint Paul, he invested man with a new power; he might rise, from globe to globe, to the very Fount of eternal life. Jacob's mystical ladder was both the religious formula and the traditional proof of the fact. He soared through space, carrying with him the passionate souls of his hearers on the wings of his word, making them feel the infinite, and bathing them in the heavenly sea. Then the Doctor accounted logically for hell by circles placed in inverse order to the shining spheres that lead to God, in which torments and darkness take the place of the Spirit and of light. Pain was as intelligible as rapture. The terms of the comparison were present in the conditions of human life and its various atmospheres of suffering and of intellect. Thus the most extraordinary traditions of hell and purgatory were quite naturally conceivable.

He gave the fundamental *rationale* of virtue with admirable clearness. A pious man, toiling onward in poverty, proud of his good conscience, at peace with himself, and steadfastly true to himself in his heart in spite of the spectacle of exultant vice, was a fallen angel doing penance, who remembered his origin, foresaw his guerdon, accomplished his task, and obeyed his glorious mission. The sublime resignation of Christians was then seen in all its glory. He depicted martyrs at the burning stake, and almost stripped them of their merit by stripping them of their sufferings. He showed their inner angel as dwelling in the heavens, while the outer man was tortured by the executioner's sword. He described angels dwelling among men, and gave tokens by which to recognize them.

He next strove to drag from the very depths of man's understanding the real sense of the word fall, which occurs in every language. He appealed to the most widely-spread traditions in evidence of this one true origin, explaining, with much lucidity, the passion all men have for rising, mounting —an instinctive ambition, the perennial revelation of our destiny.

He displayed the whole universe at a glance, and described the nature of God Himself circulating in a full tide from the centre to the extremities, and from the extremities to the centre again. Nature was one and homogeneous. In the most seemingly trivial, as in the most stupendous work, everything obeyed that law; each created object reproduced in little an exact image of that nature—the sap in the plant, the blood in man, the orbits of the planets. He piled proof on proof, always completing his idea by a picture musical with poetry.

And he boldly anticipated every objection. He thundered forth an eloquent challenge to the monumental works of science and human excrescences of knowledge, such as those which societies use the elements of the earthly globe to produce. He asked whether our wars, our disasters, our depravity could hinder the great movement given by God to all the globes; and he laughed human impotence to scorn by pointing to their efforts everywhere in ruins. He cried upon the manes of Tyre, Carthage, and Babylon; he called upon Babel and Jerusalem to appear; and sought, without finding them, the transient furrows made by the ploughshare of civilization. Humanity floated on the surface of the earth as a ship whose wake is lost in the calm level of ocean.

These were the fundamental notions set forth in Doctor Sigier's address, all wrapped in the mystical language and strange school Latin of the time. He had made a special study of the Scriptures, and they supplied him with the weapons with which he came before his contemporaries to hasten their progress. He hid his boldness under his immense learning, as with a cloak, and his philosophical bent

under a saintly life. At this moment, after bringing his hearers face to face with God, after packing the universe into an idea, and almost unveiling the idea of the world, he gazed down on the silent, throbbing mass, and scrutinized the stranger with a look. Then, spurred on, no doubt, by the presence of this remarkable personage, he added these words, from which I have eliminated the corrupt Latinity of the Middle Ages:—

"Where, think you, may a man find these fruitful truths if not in the heart of God Himself?—What am I?—The humble interpreter of a single line left to us by the greatest of the Apostles—a single line out of thousands all equally full of light. Before us, Saint Paul said, *'In Deo vivimus movemur et sumus.'* In our day, less believing and more learned, or better instructed and more sceptical, we should ask the Apostle, 'To what end this perpetual motion? Whither leads this life divided into zones? Wherefore an intelligence that begins with the obscure perfection of marble and proceeds from sphere to sphere up to man, up to the angel, up to God? Where is the Fount, where is the ocean, if life, attaining to God across worlds and stars, through Matter and Spirit, has to come down again to some other goal?'

"You desire to see both aspects of the universe at once. You would adore the Sovereign on condition of being suffered to sit for an instant on His throne. Mad fools that we are! We will not admit that the most intelligent animals are able to understand our ideas and the object of our actions; we are merciless to the creatures of the inferior spheres, and exile them from our own; we deny them the faculty of divining human thoughts, and yet we ourselves would fain master the highest of all ideas—the Idea of the Idea!

"Well, go then, start! Fly by faith up from globe to globe, soar through space! Thought, love, and faith are its mystical keys. Traverse the circles, reach the throne! God is more merciful than you are; He opens His temple to all His

creatures. Only, do not forget the pattern of Moses; put your shoes from off your feet, cast off all filth, leave your body far behind; otherwise you shall be consumed; for God—God is Light!"

Just as Doctor Sigier spoke these grand words, his face radiant, his hand uplifted, a sunbeam pierced through an open window, like a magic jet from a fount of splendor, a long triangular shaft of gold that lay like a scarf over the whole assembly. They all clapped their hands, for the audience accepted this effect of the sinking sun as a miracle. There was a universal cry of:

"Vivat! Vivat!"

The very sky seemed to shed approval. Godefroid, struck with reverence, looked from the old man to Doctor Sigier; they were talking together in an undertone.

"All honor to the Master!" said the stranger.

"What is such transient honor?" replied Sigier.

"I would I could perpetuate my gratitude," said the older man.

"A line written by you is enough!" said the Doctor. "It would give me immortality, humanly speaking."

"Can I give what I have not?" cried the elder.

Escorted by the crowd, which followed in their footsteps, like courtiers round a king, at a respectful distance, Godefroid, with the old man and the Doctor, made their way to the oozy shore, where as yet there were no houses, and where the ferryman was waiting for them. The Doctor and the stranger were talking together, not in Latin nor in any Gallic tongue, but in an unknown language, and very gravely. They pointed with their hands now to heaven and now to the earth. Sigier, to whom the paths by the river were familiar, guided the venerable stranger with particular care to the narrow planks which here and there bridged the mud; the following watched them inquisitively; and some of the students envied the privileged boy who might walk with these two great masters of speech. Finally, the Doctor took leave of the stranger, and the ferry-boat pushed off.

At the moment when the boat was afloat on the wide river, communicating its motion to the soul, the sun pierced the clouds like a conflagration blazing up on the horizon, and poured forth a flood of light, coloring slate roof-tops and humbler thatch with a ruddy glow and tawny reflections, fringed Philippe Auguste's towers with fire, flooded the sky, dyed the waters, gilded the plants, and aroused the half-sleeping insects The immense shaft of light set the clouds on fire. It was like the last verse of the daily hymn. Every heart was thrilled; nature in such a moment is sublime.

As he gazed at the spectacle, the stranger's eyes moistened with the tenderest of human tears: Godefroid too was weeping; his trembling hand touched that of the elder man, who, looking round, confessed his emotion. But thinking his dignity as a man compromised, no doubt, to redeem it, he said in a deep voice:

"I weep for my native land. I am an exile! Young man, in such an hour as this I left my home. There, at this hour, the fireflies are coming out of their fragile dwellings and clinging like diamond sparks to the leaves of the iris. At this hour the breeze, as sweet as the sweetest poetry, rises up from a valley bathed in light, bearing on its wings the richest fragrance. On the horizon I could see a golden city like the Heavenly Jerusalem—a city whose name I may not speak. There, too, a river winds. But that city and its buildings, that river of which the lovely vistas, and the pools of blue water, mingled, crossed, and embraced each other, which gladdened my sight and filled me with love—where are they?

"At that hour the waters assumed fantastic hues under the sunset sky, and seemed to be painted pictures; the stars dropped tender streaks of light, the moon spread its pleasing snares; it gave another life to the trees, to the color and form of things, and a new aspect to the sparkling water, the silent hills, the eloquent buildings. The city spoke, it glittered, it called to me to return!

"Columns of smoke rose up by the side of the ancient

pillars, whose marble sheen gleamed white through the night; the lines of the horizon were still visible through the mists of evening; all was harmony and mystery. Nature would not say farewell; she desired to keep me there. Ah! It was all in all to me; my mother and my child, my wife and my glory! The very bells bewailed my condemnation. Oh, land of marvels! It is as beautiful as heaven. From that hour the wide world has been my dungeon. Beloved land, why hast thou rejected me?

"But I shall triumph there yet!" he cried, speaking with an accent of such intense conviction and such a ringing tone, that the boatman started as at a trumpet call.

The stranger was standing in a prophetic attitude and gazing southwards into the blue, pointing to his native home across the skyey regions. The ascetic pallor of his face had given place to a glow of triumph, his eyes flashed, he was as grand as a lion shaking his mane.

"But you, poor child," he went on, looking at Godefroid, whose cheeks were beaded with glittering tears, "have you, like me, studied life from blood-stained pages? What can you have to weep for, at your age?"

"Alas!" said Godefroid, "I regret a land more beautiful than any land on earth—a land I never saw and yet remember. Oh, if I could but cleave the air on beating wings, I would fly——"

"Whither?" asked the exile.

"Up there," replied the boy.

On hearing this answer, the stranger seemed surprised; he looked darkly at the youth, who remained silent. They seemed to communicate by an unspeakable effusion of the spirit, hearing each other's yearnings in the teeming silence, and going forth side by side, like two doves sweeping the air on equal wing, till the boat, touching the strand of the island, roused them from their deep reverie.

Then, each lost in thought, they went together to the sergeant's house.

"And so the boy believes that he is an angel exiled from

heaven!" thought the tall stranger. "Which of us all has a right to undeceive him? Not I—I, who am so often lifted by some magic spell so far above the earth; I who am dedicate to God; I who am a mystery to myself. Have I not already seen the fairest of the angels dwelling in this mire? Is this child more or less crazed than I am? Has he taken a bolder step in the way of faith? He believes, and his belief no doubt will lead him into some path of light like that in which I walk. But though he is as beautiful as an angel, is he not too feeble to stand fast in such a struggle?"

Abashed by the presence of his companion, whose voice of thunder expressed to him his own thoughts, as lightning expresses the will of Heaven, the boy was satisfied to gaze at the stars with a lover's eyes. Overwhelmed by a luxury of sentiment, which weighed on his heart, he stood there timid and weak—a midge in the sunbeams. Sigier's discourse had proved to them the mysteries of the spiritual world; the tall, old man was to invest them with glory; the lad felt them in himself, though he could in no way express them. The three represented in living embodiment Science, Poetry, and Feeling.

On going into the house, the Exile shut himself into his room, lighted the inspiring lamp, and gave himself over to the ruthless demon of Work, seeking words of the silence and ideas of the night. Godefroid sat down in his window sill, by turns gazing at the moon reflected in the water, and studying the mysteries of the sky. Lost in one of the trances that were frequent with him, he traveled from sphere to sphere, from vision to vision, listening for obscure rustlings and the voices of angels, and believing that he heard them; seeing, or fancying that he saw, a divine radiance in which he lost himself; striving to attain the far-away goal, the source of all light, the fount of all harmony.

Presently the vast clamor of Paris, brought down on the current, was hushed; lights were extinguished one by one in the houses; silence spread over all; and the huge city slept like a tired giant.

Midnight struck. The least noise, the fall of a leaf, or the flight of a jackdaw changing its perching-place among the pinnacles of Notre-Dame, would have been enough to bring the stranger's mind to earth again, to have made the youth drop from the celestial heights to which his soul had soared on the wings of rapture.

And then the old man heard with dismay a groan mingling with the sound of a heavy fall—the fall, as his experienced ear assured him, of a dead body. He hastened into Godefroid's room, and saw him lying in a heap with a long rope tight round his neck, the end meandering over the floor.

When he had untied it, the poor lad opened his eyes.

"Where am I?" he asked, with a hopeful gleam.

"In your own room," said the elder man, looking with surprise at Godefroid's neck, and at the nail to which the cord had been tied, and which was still in the knot.

"In heaven?" said the boy, in a voice of music.

"No; on earth!"

Godefroid rose and walked along the path of light traced on the floor by the moon through the window, which stood open; he saw the rippling Seine, the willows and plants on the island. A misty atmosphere hung over the waters like a smoky floor.

On seeing the view, to him so heartbreaking, he folded his hands over his bosom, and stood in an attitude of despair; the Exile came up to him with astonishment on his face.

"You meant to kill yourself?" he asked.

"Yes," replied Godefroid, while the stranger passed his hand about his neck again and again to feel the place where the rope had tightened on it.

But for some slight bruises, the young man had been but little hurt. His friend supposed that the nail had given way at once under the weight of the body, and the terrible attempt had ended in a fall without injury.

"And why, dear lad, did you try to kill yourself?"

"Alas!" said Godefroid, no longer restraining the tears that rolled down his cheeks, "I heard the Voice from on high;

it called me by name! It had never named me before, but this time it bade me to Heaven! Oh, how sweet is that voice!—As I could not fly to Heaven," he added artlessly, "I took the only way we know of going to God."

"My child! oh, sublime boy!" cried the old man, throwing his arms round Godefroid, and clasping him to his heart. "You are a poet; you can boldly ride the whirlwind! Your poetry does not proceed from your heart; your living, burning thoughts, your creations, move and grow in your soul.—Go, never reveal your ideas to the vulgar! Be at once the altar, the priest, and the victim!

"You know Heaven, do you not? You have seen those myriads of angels, white-winged, and holding golden sistrums, all soaring with equal flight towards the Throne, and you have often seen their pinions moving at the breath of God as the trees of the forest bow with one consent before the storm. Ah, how glorious is unlimited space! Tell me."

The stranger clasped Godefroid's hand convulsively, and they both gazed at the firmament, whence the stars seemed to shed gentle poetry which they could bear.

"Oh, to see God!" murmured Godefroid.

"Child!" said the old man suddenly, in a sterner voice, "have you so soon forgotten the holy teaching of our good master, Doctor Sigier? In order to return, you to your heavenly home, and I to my native land on earth, must we not obey the voice of God? We must walk on resignedly in the stony paths where His almighty finger points the way. Do not you quail at the thought of the danger to which you exposed yourself? Arriving there without being bidden, and saying, 'Here I am!' before your time, would you not have been cast back into a world beneath that where your soul now hovers? Poor outcast cherub! Should you not rather bless God for having suffered you to live in a sphere where you may hear none but heavenly harmonies? Are you not as pure as a diamond, as lovely as a flower?

"Think what it is to know, like me, only the City of Sorrows!—Dwelling there I have worn out my heart.—To search

the tombs for their horrible secrets; to wipe hands steeped in blood, counting them over night after night, seeing them rise up before me imploring forgiveness which I may not grant; to mark the writhing of the assassin and the last shriek of his victim; to listen to appalling noises and fearful silence, the silence of a father devouring his dead sons; to wonder at the laughter of the damned; to look for some human form among the livid heaps wrung and trampled by crime; to learn words such as living men may not hear without dying; to call perpetually on the dead, and always to accuse and condemn!—Is that living?"

"Cease!" cried Godefroid; "I cannot see you or hear you any further! My reason wanders, my eyes are dim. You light a fire within me which consumes me."

"And yet I must go on!" said the senior, waving his hand with a strange gesture that worked on the youth like a spell.

For a moment the old man fixed Godefroid with his large, weary, lightless eyes; then he pointed with one finger to the ground. A gulf seemed to open at his bidding. He remained standing in the doubtful light of the moon; it lent a glory to his brow which reflected an almost solar gleam. Though at first a somewhat disdainful expression lurked in the wrinkles of his face, his look presently assumed the fixity which seems to gaze on an object invisible to the ordinary organs of sight. His eyes, no doubt, were seeing then the remoter images which the grave has in store for us.

Never, perhaps, had this man presented so grand an aspect. A terrible struggle was going on in his soul, and reacted on his outer frame; strong man as he seemed to be, he bent as a reed bows under the breeze that comes before a storm. Godefroid stood motionless, speechless, spellbound; some inexplicable force nailed him to the floor; and, as happens when our attention takes us out of ourselves while watching a fire or a battle, he was wholly unconscious of his body.

"Shall I tell you the fate to which you were hastening, poor angel of love? Listen! It has been given to me to see

immeasurable space, bottomless gulfs in which all human creations are swallowed up, the shoreless sea whither flows the vast stream of men and of angels. As I made my way through the realms of eternal torment, I was sheltered under the cloak of an immortal—the robe of glory due to genius, and which the ages hand on—I, a frail mortal! When I wandered through the fields of light where the happy souls play, I was borne up by the love of a woman, the wings of an angel; resting on her heart, I could taste the ineffable pleasures whose touch is more perilous to us mortals than are the torments of the worser world.

"As I achieved my pilgrimage through the dark regions below I had mounted from torture to torture, from crime to crime, from punishment to punishment, from awful silence to heartrending cries, till I reached the uppermost circle of Hell. Already, from afar, I could see the glory of Paradise shining at a vast distance; I was still in darkness, but on the borders of day. I flew, upheld by my Guide, borne along by a power akin to that which, during our dreams, wafts us to spheres invisible to the eye of the body. The halo that crowned our heads scared away the shades as we passed, like impalpable dust. Far above us the suns of all the worlds shone with scarce so much light as the twinkling fireflies of my native land. I was soaring towards the fields of air where, round about Paradise, the bodies of light are in closer array, where the azure is easy to pass through, where worlds innumerable spring like flowers in a meadow.

"There, on the last level of the circles where those phantoms dwell that I had left behind me, like sorrows one would fain forget, I saw a vast shade. Standing in an attitude of aspiration, that soul looked eagerly into space; his feet were riveted by the will of God to the topmost point of the margin, and he remained for ever in the painful strain by which we project our purpose when we long to soar, as birds about to take wing. I saw the man; he neither looked at us nor heard us; every muscle quivered and throbbed; at each separate instant he seemed to feel, though he did not move, all the

fatigue of traversing the infinite that divided him from Paradise where, as he gazed steadfastly, he believed he had glimpses of a beloved image. At this last gate of Hell, as at the first, I saw the stamp of despair even in hope. The hapless creature was so fearfully held by some unseen force that his anguish entered into my bones and froze my blood. I shrank closer to my Guide, whose protection restored me to peace and silence.

"Suddenly the Shade gave a cry of joy—a cry as shrill as that of the mother bird that sees a hawk in the air, or suspects its presence. We looked where he was looking, and saw, as it were, a sapphire, floating high up in the abysses of light. The glowing star fell with the swiftness of a sunbeam when it flashes over the horizon in the morning and its first rays shoot across the world. The Splendor became clearer and grew larger; presently I beheld the cloud of glory in which the angels move—a shining vapor that emanates from their divine substance, and that glitters here and there like tongues of flame. A noble face, whose glory none may endure that have not won the mantle, the laurel, and the palm —the attribute of the Powers—rose above this cloud as white and pure as snow. It was Light within light. His wings as they waved shed dazzling ripples in the spheres through which he descended, as the glance of God pierces through the universe. At last I saw the archangel in all his glory. The flower of eternal beauty that belongs to the angels of the Spirit shone in him. In one hand he held a green palm branch, in the other a sword of flame: the palm to bestow on the pardoned soul, the sword to drive back all the hosts of Hell with one sweep. As he approached, the perfumes of Heaven fell upon us as dew. In the region where the archangel paused, the air took the hues of opal, and moved in eddies of which he was the centre. He paused, looked at the Shade, and said:

"'To-morrow.'

"Then he turned heavenwards once more, spread his wings, and clove through space as a vessel cuts through the waves,

hardly showing her white sails to the exiles left on some deserted shore.

"The Shade uttered appalling cries, to which the damned responded from the lowest circle, the deepest in the immensity of suffering, to the more peaceful zone near the surface on which we were standing. This worst torment of all had appealed to all the rest. The turmoil was swelled by the roar of a sea of fire which formed a bass to the terrific harmony of endless millions of suffering souls.

"Then suddenly the Shade took flight through the doleful city, and down to its place at the very bottom of Hell; but as suddenly it came up again, turned, soared through the endless circles in every direction, as a vulture, confined for the first time in a cage, exhausts itself in vain efforts. The Shade was free to do this; he could wander through the zones of Hell icy, fetid, or scorching without enduring their pangs; he glided into that vastness as a sunbeam makes its way into the deepest dark.

" 'God has not condemned him to any torment,' said the Master; 'but not one of the souls you have seen suffering their various punishments would exchange his anguish for the hope that is consuming this soul.'

"And just then the Shade came back to us, brought thither by an irresistible force which condemned him to parch on the verge of Hell. My divine Guide, guessing my curiosity, touched the unhappy Shade with his palm-branch. He, who was perhaps trying to measure the age of sorrow that divided him from that ever-vanishing 'To-morrow,' started and gave a look full of all the tears he had already shed.

" 'You would know my woe?' said he sadly. 'Oh, I love to tell it. I am here, Teresa is above; that is all. On earth we were happy, we were always together. When I saw my loved Teresa Donati for the first time, she was ten years old. We loved each other even then, not knowing what love meant. Our lives were one; I turned pale if she were pale, I was happy in her joy; we gave ourselves up to the pleasure

of thinking and feeling together; and we learned what love was, each through the other. We were wedded at Cremona; we never saw each other's lips but decked with the pearls of a smile; our eyes always shone; our hair, like our desires, flowed together; our heads were always bent over one book when we read, our feet walked in equal step. Life was one long kiss, our home was a nest.

"'One day, for the first time, Teresa turned pale and said "I am in pain!"—And I was not in pain!

"'She never rose again. I saw her sweet face change, her golden hair fade—and I did not die! She smiled to hide her sufferings, but I could read them in her blue eyes, of which I could interpret the slightest trembling. "Honorino, I love you!" said she, at the very moment when her lips turned white, and she was clasping my hand still in hers when death chilled them. So I killed myself that she might not lie alone in her sepulchral bed, under her marble sheet. Teresa is above, and I am here. I could not bear to leave her, but God has divided us. Why, then, did He unite us on earth? He is jealous! Paradise was no doubt so much the fairer on the day when Teresa entered in.

"'Do you see her? She is sad in her bliss; she is parted from me! Paradise must be a desert to her.'

"'Master,' said I with tears, for I thought of my love, 'when this one shall desire Paradise for God's sake alone, shall he not be delivered?' And the Father of Poets mildly bowed his head in sign of assent.

"We departed, cleaving the air, and making no more noise than the birds that pass overhead sometimes when we lie in the shade of a tree. It would have been vain to try to check the hapless shade in his blasphemy. It is one of the griefs of the angels of darkness that they can never see the light even when they are surrounded by it. He would not have understood us."

At this moment the swift approach of many horses rang through the stillness, the dog barked, the constable's deep

growl replied; the horsemen dismounted, knocked at the door; the noise was so unexpected that it seemed like some sudden explosion.

The two exiles, the two poets, fell to earth through all the space that divides us from the skies. The painful shock of this fall rushed through their veins like strange blood, hissing as it seemed, and full of scorching sparks. Their pain was like an electric discharge. The loud, heavy step of a man-at-arms sounded on the stairs with the iron clank of his sword, his cuirass, and spurs; a soldier presently stood before the astonished stranger.

"We can return to Florence," said the man, whose bass voice sounded soft as he spoke in Italian.

"What is that you say?" asked the old man.

"The *Bianchi* are triumphant."

"Are you not mistaken?" asked the poet.

"No, dear Dante!" replied the soldier, whose warlike tones rang with the thrill of battle and the exultation of victory.

"To Florence! To Florence! Ah, my Florence!" cried Dante Alighieri, drawing himself up, and gazing into the distance. In fancy he saw Italy; he was gigantic.

"But I—when shall I be in Heaven?" said Godefroid, kneeling on one knee before the immortal poet, like an angel before the sanctuary.

"Come to Florence," said Dante in compassionate tones. "Come! when you see its lovely landscape from the heights of Fiesole you will fancy yourself in Paradise."

The soldier smiled. For the first time, perhaps for the only time in his life, Dante's gloomy and solemn features wore a look of joy; his eyes and brow expressed the happiness he has depicted so lavishly in his vision of Paradise. He thought perhaps that he heard the voice of Beatrice.

A light step, and the rustle of a woman's gown, were audible in the silence. Dawn was now showing its first streaks of light. The fair Comtesse de Mahaut came in and flew to Godefroid.

"Come, my child, my son! I may at last acknowledge

you. Your birth is recognized, your rights are under the protection of the King of France, and you will find Paradise in your mother's heart."

"I hear, I know, the voice of Heaven!" cried the youth in rapture.

The exclamation roused Dante, who saw the young man folded in the Countess' arms. He took leave of them with a look, and left his young companion on his mother's bosom.

"Come away!" he cried in a voice of thunder. "Death to the Guelphs!"

PARIS, *October* 1831.

MAÎTRE CORNÉLIUS

To Monsieur Le Comte Georges Mniszech.

Some envious persons, when they see one of the oldest and most illustrious of Sarmatian names adorning this page, may imagine that I am endeavoring, as goldsmiths do, to enhance a piece of modern work by the addition of an ancient gem,—a fashion of the day. But you, my dear Count, and a few others, will know that I aim at paying my debt to talent, old memories, and friendship.

In 1479, on All Saints' day, at the moment when this tale opens, vespers were just over in the cathedral of Tours. The Archbishop Hélie de Bourdeilles rose from his throne, himself to pronounce the blessing on the worshipers. The sermon had been lengthy, dusk had fallen before the service was ended, and utter darkness prevailed in many parts of the great church, of which the towers, at that time, were not finished.

However, a considerable number of tapers were burning in honor of the saints, on the triangular frames constructed for the display of these pious offerings, of which the virtue and meaning have never been fully understood. The candles on every altar and the candelabra in the choir were all flaming. These masses of light, irregularly occurring among the forest of pillars and arches that sustain the three aisles of the cathedral, scarcely illuminated the vast body of the church; for, by throwing the deep shadows of the piers across the upper portions of the building, they gave rise to a thousand fantastic effects which added to the gloom in which arches, vaulting, and chapels were now wrapped,—dark enough as they were even in broad daylight.

The congregation presented effects that were not less picturesque. Some figures were so dimly visible in the doubtful light that they might have been taken for phantoms; others, hit by some side-light, caught the eye like the principal heads in a picture. Statues seemed to live, and men seemed turned to stone. Here and there eyes sparkled in the recess of a pillar; the stone had sight, the marble spoke, the vault reëchoed sighs, the whole structure was endowed with life.

The life of a people can show no more solemn scene, no more majestic moment. Men, in masses, always need action to produce a poetical effect; still, in these homes of religious thought, where human wealth is wedded to celestial splendor, there is an incredible sublimity in silence; there is awe in these bended knees and hope in these uplifted hands. The concord of feeling with which all the assembled souls fly heavenward, produces an indescribably spiritual effect. The mystical exaltation of the united believers reacts on each individual; the feeble are no doubt borne upwards on the full tide of this ocean of love and faith.

Prayer, an electrical force, thus snatches our nature upwards. This involuntary union of so many wills, all equally humbled to earth, all equally lifted to heaven, contains, no doubt, the secret of the magical influences exerted by the chanting of the priests and the music of the organ, the perfume and pomp of the altar, the voice of the crowd and its meditations in silence.

Hence we need not be surprised when we see, in the middle ages, that so many love affairs had their beginnings in church, after long hours of ecstasy—passions which often had no saintly ending and for which the woman, as she always must, ended by doing penance. Religious emotion had certainly, at that time, some affinity with love; it was either the element or the end of it. Love was still a second religion; it still had its fine frenzies, its artless superstitions, its sublime emotion in harmony with those of Christianity.

The manners of the time also help to explain the alliance

between religion and love. In the first place, society never mingled but in front of the altar. Lords and vassals, men and women, were nowhere equal but in church. There alone could lovers meet and exchange their vows. Then Church Festivals were the only spectacles; a woman's soul was more deeply stirred within the walls of a cathedral than it now is at a ball or an opera. And does not every strong emotion bring a woman round to love? Thus, by dint of forming part of life, and identifying itself with every act, religion had become the moving principle of virtue and vice alike. Religion was mixed up with science, with politics, with eloquence, with crime; on the throne or in the skin of the poor and suffering; it was all-pervading.

These semi-learned reflections will perhaps certify to the truth of this *Étude*, though some of its details may scandalize the improved propriety of our age—a little too strait-laced perhaps, as we all know.

At the instant when the priests ceased their chanting, the last notes of the organ mingling with the throbbing *Amen* sent out from the deep-chested choir-men, while a faint murmur still lingered under the remoter vaults and the devout assembly awaited the prelate's benedictory words, a citizen, in a hurry to get home, or fearing to lose his purse in the crowd going out, gently stole away, at the risk of being regarded as a bad Catholic. A gentleman, who had lurked till now close to one of the enormous pillars of the choir, where he was shrouded in the shadow, hastened to take the place left vacant by the worthy burgess. As soon as he reached it, he hid his face in the feathers that adorned his tall gray cap, and knelt down on a chair in a contrite attitude that might have deceived an inquisitor.

His neighbors, having stared curiously at the youth, appeared to recognize him and turned to their devotions once more with a significant shrug, by which they all expressed the same idea—a sarcastic mocking thought, an unspoken scandal. Two old women nodded their heads and exchanged glances which seemed to read the future.

The chair taken by the young man was close to a chapel built in between two pillars, and closed by an iron railing. At that time the Chapter was wont to let out at a high figure the use of the side chapels situated outside the ambulatory, to certain lordly families, who thus had a right to occupy them exclusively, with their people, during divine service. This form of simony is practised even now. A lady had her chapel in church, as in our day she has a box at the opera. The lessees of these privileged nooks were, however, expected to decorate and keep up the altars in them. Thus each one made it a point of honor to make his chapel as sumptuous as possible, a form of vanity very acceptable to the Church.

In this chapel, close to the railing, knelt a young lady, on a handsome square of red velvet with gold tassels, close to the spot but just now occupied by the worthy citizen. A silver-gilt lamp, hanging from the roof of the chapel in front of a magnificent altar, shed a dim light on the Book of Hours that the lady held. This book shook violently in her hand as the young gentleman came towards her.

"*Amen!*" and to this response, chanted in a sweet voice with terrible agitation, happily drowned in the general noise, she added in a low tone: "You will ruin me!"

The words were spoken with an innocence to which any man of delicate feeling could not fail to submit; it went piercingly to the heart; but the stranger, carried away no doubt by a tumult of passion that stifled his conscience, remained in his seat, and slightly raised his head to look hastily into the chapel.

"He is asleep," he replied in a voice so carefully modulated that the words could only be heard by the lady as a sound is heard in its echo.

The young woman turned pale, her eyes were furtively raised for an instant from the vellum page to glance at an old man whom the youth was studying. What a terrible understanding was conveyed by that look! When the lady had examined the old man, she drew a deep breath and raised her

beautiful brow, adorned with a precious jewel, to a picture representing the Virgin; this simple gesture and attitude, with her glistening eye, revealed her life with imprudent candor: if she had been wicked, she would have dissimulated her feelings.

The person who inspired such terror in these lovers was a little old hunchback, almost bald, with a fierce expression of face, and a large dingy-gray beard cut square into a broad fan. The Cross of Saint-Michael glittered on his breast; his hands, which were coarse, strong, and rough, with gray hairs, had no doubt been clasped, but had fallen a little apart in the sleep he had so imprudently allowed to overtake him. His right hand seemed about to drop on to the handle of his dagger, of which the hilt was guarded by a large shell of pierced iron; from the way he had arranged the weapon, the handle was just below his hand; if by ill chance he should touch it, beyond a doubt he would wake and look at his wife. His sardonic mouth and the sharp turn of his chin were characteristic signs of a malignant wit, of a coldly cruel shrewdness, which would enable him to guess everything, because he could imagine anything. His yellow forehead was wrinkled like that of a man accustomed to believe nothing, to weigh everything, to test the exact meaning and value of every human action as a miser rings every gold piece. His frame was large-boned and strongly knit, he might be nervous and consequently irritable—in short, an ogre spoiled in the making.

When her terrible lord would wake, the young lady evidently would be in danger. This jealous husband would not fail to note the difference between the old burgess, whose presence had given him no umbrage, and the newcomer, a young courtier, smart and genteel.

"*Libera nos a malo!*" said she, trying to convey her fears to the young man.

He, on his part, raised his head and gazed at her. There were tears in his eyes, tears of love or despair. Seeing this, the lady started, and lost her head. They had both,

no doubt, held out for a long time, and perhaps could no longer resist a passion encouraged day after day by invincible obstacles, brooded by fears, and emboldened by youth. The lady was not perfectly beautiful, but her pale complexion betrayed a secret grief which made her interesting. She was elegant and had the most magnificent hair imaginable. Watched over by a tiger, she was risking her life perhaps by uttering a word, by allowing her hand to be taken, by meeting his look. If ever love had been more deeply buried in two hearts, or more rapturously confessed, no passion could ever have been more dangerous.

It may easily be understood that to these two beings, the air, the sounds about them, the noise of steps on the pavement,—things utterly indifferent to other men,—had some peculiarities, some perceptible properties which they alone detected. Love enabled them, perhaps, to find a faithful messenger even in the icy cold hands of the old priests to whom they confessed their sins, or from whom they received the Host, kneeling at the altar. It was a deep love, love graven on the soul like a scar on the body which remains for life. As the two young people looked at each other, the woman seemed to say to her lover: "Let us perish, but be one!" and the gentleman seemed to reply: "We will be one, but we will not perish!"

But then, with a melancholy jerk of the head, she pointed out to him an elderly duenna and a couple of pages. The duenna was asleep. The pages were but boys, and seemed perfectly reckless of any good or ill that might befall their master.

"Do not be frightened as you go out, but go just where you are led."

The young man had scarcely murmured these words, when the old gentleman's hand slipped down on to the handle of his weapon. At the touch of the cold iron he woke with a start, and his tawny eyes at once turned to his wife. By a peculiarity rarely bestowed, even on men of genius, he awoke with a brain as alert, and ideas as clear, as if he had never slept. He was jealous.

Though the young man kept one eye on his mistress, he watched her husband out of the other; he rose at once, and vanished behind a pillar, just as the old fellow's hands began to move; then he went off as lightly as a bird. The lady's eyes were fixed on her book. She pretended to be reading, and tried to seem calm; but she could not hinder herself from reddening, nor her heart from beating with unwonted violence.

The old man heard the vehement throbs that were audible in the chapel, and observed the extraordinary flush that had mounted to his wife's cheeks, brow, and eyelids; he looked cautiously about him, but seeing no one whom he could suspect, he said:

"What is troubling you, *ma mie?*"

"The smell of the incense makes me squeamish," said she.

"Then is it not good to-day?" said he.

In spite of this comment, the wily old man affected to believe in this excuse; still, he suspected some secret treason, and resolved to watch more carefully over his treasure.

The Benediction was pronounced. The crowd, without waiting for the end of *in secula seculorum,* hurried to the church door like a torrent. The old lord, as was his custom, waited quietly till the general rush was moderated, and then went forth, sending the duenna in front with the youngest page, who carried a lantern on a pole; he gave his arm to his wife and the other page followed. Just as the old gentleman had reached the side door opening into the eastern part of the cloisters, by which he usually went out, a crowd of people turned back from the mass that was blocking the front porch, surging in towards the aisle where he and his people were standing, and this compact body prevented his retracing his steps. The gentleman and his wife were, in fact, pushed out by the tremendous pressure of the crowd. The husband tried to get through first, dragging the lady by the arm; but at this juncture he was violently pulled into the street, and his wife was snatched from him by a stranger.

The sinister hunchback at once understood that this was a deep-laid plot into which he had fallen. Repenting now of his long nap, he collected all his strength; with one hand he clutched at his wife's gown, and with the other he tried to cling to the door-post. But the frenzy of love won the day from the fury of jealousy. The young man took his mistress round the waist, and snatched her away with such strength of despair that the tissue of silk and gold, the brocade, and whalebone gave way, and split with a crash. The sleeve was left in her husband's hand.

A roar like a lion's rose above the shouts of the multitude, and an awful voice was heard bellowing these words:

"Help! Poitiers! Here, to the door! The Comte de Saint-Vallier's people! Help, this way, help!"

And the Comte Aymar de Poitiers, Sire de Saint-Vallier, tried to draw his sword, and get a way cleared for him to pass; but he found himself closely surrounded by thirty or forty gentlemen whom it would have been dangerous to wound. Several of these, men of the highest rank, answered him with gibes, as they hauled him out to the cloister.

The ravisher, with the swiftness of lightning, had led the Countess to an open chapel, where he found her a seat on a wooden bench behind a confessional. By the light of the tapers burning before the image of the saint to whom the chapel was dedicated, they looked at each other for a moment in silence, clasping hands, and mutually amazed at their daring. The Countess had not the heart to blame the young man for the audacity to which she owed this first and only instant of happiness.

"Will you fly with me into the adjacent territory?" he asked her eagerly. "I have at hand a pair of English jennets which will carry us thirty leagues without drawing rein."

"Oh," cried she sweetly, "where in the world can you find asylum for a daughter of Louis XI.?"

"To be sure," replied the gentleman, bewildered by this difficulty, which he had overlooked.

"Why, then, did you tear me from my husband?" she asked in some terror.

"Alas!" replied he, "I had not thought of the agitation I should feel on finding myself by your side, on hearing you speak to me. I had conceived of two or three plans, and now that I see you, I feel as if everything were achieved."

"But I am lost," said the Countess.

"We are saved," replied the gentleman, with the blind enthusiasm of love. "Listen to me——"

"It will cost me my life," she went on, letting the tears flow which had gathered in her eyes. "The Count will kill me,—this evening, perhaps. But go to the King, tell him of all the torments his daughter has endured for five years past. He loved me well when I was a child. He was wont to laugh and call me Mary-full-of-grace because I was so ugly. Oh, if he could know to what a man he gave me, he would be in a terrible rage! I have never dared to complain, out of pity for the Count. And, besides, how should my voice reach the King's ears? My confessor even is a spy for Saint-Vallier. I therefore lent myself to this criminal escape, in the hope of enlisting a champion. But—dare I trust—— Oh!" she cried, breaking off and turning pale; "here is the page."

The unhappy Countess tried to make a veil of her hands to hide her face.

"Fear nothing," said the young man; "he is on our side. You may make use of him in all security; he is mine. When the Count comes in search of you, he will warn us in time. In that confessional," he went on in an undertone, "is a canon who is a friend of mine. He will say that he has rescued you from the fray and led you, under his protection, to this chapel. Thus everything is prepared for deceiving Saint-Vallier."

On hearing this, the Countess dried away her tears, but her brow was clouded with alarm.

"There is no deceiving him," said she. "He will know everything this evening. Beware of his revenge. Go to Le Plessis, see the King, tell him that——"

She hesitated, but something gave her courage to tell the secrets of her married life, and she went on.

"Yes, tell him that to secure his mastery over me the Count has me bled in both arms and exhausts me. Tell him he has dragged me by my hair—tell him I am a prisoner —say that——"

Her heart was bursting, sobs choked her throat, a few tears fell again, and in her agitation she allowed the young man to kiss her hand while he uttered incoherent phrases.

"No one may speak to the King, poor child! Though I am the nephew of the grand captain of the crossbowmen, I cannot get into Le Plessis this night. My beloved lady, my beautiful queen!—— Good God! how she has suffered! Marie, let me say two words to you or we are lost!"

"What is to become of us?" said she.

The Countess discerned on the blackened wall a picture of the Virgin on which the light fell, and she cried out:

"Holy Mother of God, give us counsel."

"To-night," the gentleman went on, "I will be in your house."

"How?" she asked, very simply.

They were in such great peril that their fondest words seemed bereft of tenderness.

"I am going this evening to propose myself as an apprentice to Maître Cornélius, the King's treasurer. I have succeeded in obtaining a letter of introduction which will secure his receiving me. His house is close to yours. Once under that old rascal's roof, by the help of a silken ladder I can find my way to your rooms."

"Oh!" cried she, petrified with dismay, "if you love me, do not go to Maître Cornélius."

"Why!" cried he, clasping her to his heart with all the strength of his youth. "Then you love me?"

"Yes," said she. "Are you not my only hope? You

are a gentleman; I place my honor in your hands. And indeed," she went on with dignified confidence, "I am too unfortunate for you to betray my trust. But to what end is all this? Go, leave me to die rather than take up your abode with Cornélius. Do you not know that all his apprentices——"

"Have been hanged?" said the gentleman, laughing. "Do you suppose that his treasure tempts me?"

"Nay, nay, do not go there; you will be the victim of some sorcery."

"I cannot pay too dearly for the honor of serving you," replied he, giving her a look of such ardor as made her lower her eyes.

"And my husband?" said she.

"Here is something to send him to sleep," replied the young man, taking a small phial out of his belt.

"Not for ever?" said the Countess, trembling.

The young man's reply was a gesture of horror.

"I would have challenged him to single combat, if he were not so old," he said. "But God forbid I should rescue you from him by giving him a philter."

"Forgive me," said the Countess, blushing. "I am cruelly punished for my sins. In a moment of despair I did wish to kill the Count; I feared lest you might wish the same. My grief is great that I have not yet had an opportunity of confessing that wicked thought, but I feared that he would be told of it and he would be revenged. You are ashamed of me?" she added, hurt by the young man's silence. "I deserve your blame!"

She flung the phial violently to the ground, and it broke.

"Do not come," she went on; "the Count sleeps lightly. It is my duty to await the aid of Heaven. And that is what I will do."

She rose to go.

"Ah!" cried the young man, "bid me kill him, and I will do it, madame. You will see me this evening."

"I was wise to waste that drug," she replied, her voice husky

with the joy of finding herself so ardently beloved. "The dread of awaking my husband will save us from ourselves."

"I plight my life to you," said the youth as he held her hand.

"If the King desires it, the Pope may annul my marriage; then we may be united," said she, giving him a look full of rapturous hope.

"Here comes Monseigneur," cried the page, hurrying up.

Instantly the gentleman, amazed at the shortness of the time he had spent with his mistress, and at the Count's swift movements, snatched a kiss which the lady could not refuse.

"This evening!" he repeated, as he slipped out of the chapel.

Favored by the darkness, the lover made his way to the great entrance, creeping from pillar to pillar along the shaft of shadow cast across the church by each great column.

An old canon suddenly stepped out of the confessional and seated himself by the Countess, after gently closing the gate, while the page marched gravely up and down outside, with the composure of an assassin.

A glare of light heralded the Count; escorted by a party of friends and retainers carrying torches, he himself held his drawn sword. His gloomy gaze seemed to pierce the darkness, and search the deepest corners of the cathedral.

"Monseigneur, madame is here," said the page, going to meet him.

The Lord of Saint-Vallier found his wife kneeling in front of the altar, and the canon standing by her, reading his breviary. At this sight he shook the gate furiously as if to give vent to his rage.

"What are you doing with a naked sword in hand in this church?" asked the priest.

"Father, this gentleman is my husband," said the Countess.

The priest took the key out of his sleeve and opened the chapel gate. The Count almost involuntarily glanced round the confessional, and then went into it; then he stood listening to the silence of the place.

"Monsieur," said his wife, "you owe your thanks to this venerable canon who gave me shelter here."

The Sire de Saint-Vallier turned pale with anger, and dared not look at his friends, who had come to laugh at him rather than to help him. He sharply replied:

"Thank the Lord, Father. I will find some way to repay you."

He took his wife by the arm, and without giving her time to make her courtesy to the canon, he signed to his people and went away, without a word to those who had given him their company. There was something ominous in his silence.

Impatient to be at home, and puzzling his brain for some means of discovering the truth, he made his way along the winding streets which at that time led from the cathedral to the porch of the Chancery office, where stood the noble mansion then recently built by the Chancellor Juvénal des Ursins, on the site of an old fortress given by Charles VII. to that faithful servant as a reward for his splendid services. There began a street which has since been named Rue de la Scellerie, in memory of the office of the Great Seal which long stood there. It connected old Tours with the borough of Châteauneuf, where stood the famous Abbey of Saint-Martin, of which many kings were content to be canons. For about a hundred years, and after long discussions, this borough had been incorporated with the city.

Many of the streets adjacent to the Rue de la Scellerie, in the heart now of modern Tours, were already built; but the finest houses, and more particularly that of the Treasurer Xancoings, still standing in the Rue du Commerce, were actually situated in the commune of Châteauneuf.

It was past this that the Sire de Saint-Vallier's torch-bearers led the way, to that part of the town which lay by the river Loire; he mechanically followed, casting a dark glance now and again at his wife and at the page, hoping to detect a look of mutual understanding between them

which might throw some light on this most puzzling adventure.

At last the Count found himself in the Rue du Mûrier, where his house was. When the whole party had gone in, and the ponderous gate was shut, profound silence reigned in the narrow street where a few magnates at that time resided; for this side of the town was near to Le Plessis, the King's usual residence, enabling the courtiers to attend him at a moment's notice. The last house in this street was the last house in the town, and belonged to Maître Cornélius Hoogworst, an old merchant from Brabant, whom the King Louis XI. honored with his confidence in such financial transactions as his astute policy required outside his realm. For reasons favoring the tyranny he exerted over his wife, the Comte de Saint-Vallier had settled in a mansion adjoining Maître Cornélius' house.

The topography of the buildings will explain the advantages they offered to a jealous husband. The Count's house, known as the Hôtel de Poitiers, had a garden, shut in on the north by the wall and moat that had been the boundary of the ancient borough of Châteauneuf skirted by the embankment then lately constructed by Louis XI. between Tours and Le Plessis. On that side dogs defended the entrance to the premises, which, on the east, were divided from the neighboring houses by a large courtyard, and on the west backed on to the house occupied by Maître Cornélius. The street front faced south. Thus isolated on three sides, the suspicious and wily old Count was safe against all intruders but the inhabitants of the Brabant house, of which the roofs and chimneys were undistinguishable from those of the Hôtel de Poitiers. The windows to the street were narrow, cut in the stone walls, and barred with iron; the door, low and arched like the entrance to our ancient prisons, was strong enough to resist any attack. A stone bench for mounting on horseback was close to the porch.

On seeing the side view of the houses occupied by Maître Cornélius and the Comte de Poitiers, it could easily be

supposed that they had both been built by the same architect, and constructed for tyrants. Both, with their sinister appearance, resembled little strongholds, and would have stood a siege for some time against a furious mob. They were protected by turrets at the corners, such as lovers of antiquities may yet see in some towns where the hammer of the destroyer has not found employment. The openings, which were everywhere narrow, allowed of the shutters and doors being constructed of extraordinary strength and clamped with iron. The riots and civil wars which were so frequent in those quarrelsome times amply justified these precautions.

As six o'clock struck by the clock of the Abbey of Saint-Martin, the Countess' lover walked past the Hôtel de Poitiers, pausing a moment to hear the noise made by the Count's retainers over their supper. After glancing up at the room he might suppose to be that of his lady-love, he went on to the door of the next house. Everywhere on his way the young man had heard sounds of mirth from the feasters in every house doing honor to the holyday. From every window ineffectually shuttered came beams of light; chimneys were smoking, and the savor of roast meats gave cheer to the streets. Religious service being over, the whole town was reveling, and giving out confused sounds which the imagination can fancy better than words can describe them.

But here there was total silence; for in these two houses dwelt passions which never rejoice. Beyond them the open country was still; and here, under the shadow of the abbey towers of Saint-Martin, the two dumb houses, apart from the rest and standing in the darkest part of the tortuous street, looked like a leper's home. The building opposite to them belonged to certain state criminals, and was under sequestration. Any young man could not fail to be easily impressed by so sudden a contrast. And, indeed, on the verge of embarking in a horribly perilous enterprise, the gentleman stood pensive in front of the goldsmith's house, recalling

the various tales he had heard of Maître Cornélius and his proceedings, which had inspired the Countess with such lively fears.

At that period a warrior, a lover even, every man quaked at the word "magic." There were few imaginations that could be incredulous of extraordinary facts, or indifferent to tales of wonder. And this lover of Madame de Saint-Vallier (one of Louis XI.'s daughters by Madame de Sassenage, in Dauphiné), brave as he might be, could not but think twice before venturing into a house that was full of sorceries.

The history of Maître Cornélius Hoogworst will fully account for the confidence he had inspired in the Comte de Saint-Vallier, for the lady's terror, and for the hesitancy that gave pause to the lover. But to enable the nineteenth century reader to understand clearly how events apparently commonplace had been deemed supernatural, to make him enter into the terrors of that olden time, it is necessary to interrupt the narrative and glance at the previous career of Maître Cornélius.

Cornélius Hoogworst, one of the wealthiest merchants of Ghent, having incurred the displeasure of Charles, Duke of Burgundy, had found a refuge and protection at the Court of Louis XI. The King was quite alive to the advantages he might derive from a man in communication with the principal houses of Flanders, Venice, and Brabant; he granted to Maître Cornélius letters of nobility and naturalization; nay, he flattered him,—a rare thing with Louis XI. And, indeed the Fleming liked the King as well as the King liked the Fleming. Crafty, suspicious, avaricious; equally astute, equally well-informed, equally superior to their time, they understood each other to perfection; they dropped and took up again with equal readiness, the one his conscience and the other his religion; they worshiped the same Virgin—one from conviction, the other from flattery; finally, if we may believe the jealous statements of Olivier le Daim and Tristan, the King resorted to the goldsmith's house to take

his pleasure—as Louis XI. took it. History has taken care to preserve the memory of this monarch's licentious tastes, for he was not averse to a debauch. The old Fleming, no doubt, found it pleasant and profitable to lend himself to his royal patron's caprices and indulgences.

Cornélius had now lived in Tours for nine years. During these nine years incidents had occurred under his roof which made him the object of general execration. On arriving he had spent large sums on the house, with a view to securing his treasures. The ingenuity secretly exerted on his behalf by the locksmiths of the town, the singular precautions he had taken to get them into his house, in such a way as to feel sure of their compulsory secrecy, were for a long time the subject of a thousand wonderful tales which furnished the evening gossip of Touraine. The old man's extraordinary devices led to the idea that he was possessed of Oriental wealth. The story-tellers of the province which was the birth-place of romance in France built chambers of gold and precious stones in the Fleming's dwelling, never failing to ascribe his immense riches to unholy compacts.

Cornélius had brought with him originally a couple of Flemish varlets, an old woman, and a young apprentice of mild and attractive appearance; this youth served him as secretary, cashier, factotum, and messenger.

In the course of the first year of his residence at Tours, a considerable robbery was effected from his premises. Judicial investigation proved that the theft had been committed by someone living in the house. The old miser had his two men and his apprentice put in prison. The young lad was weakly; he died under torture, still protesting his innocence. The two men confessed, to escape torture; but on being asked by the judge where the stolen money was hidden, they were silent; so, after fresh tortures, they were tried, condemned, and hanged. On their way to the gallows they still declared that they were guiltless, after the manner of all men to be hanged.

The town of Tours talked over the strange business for many a day. But the criminals were Flemings, so the interest excited in the unfortunate men and the youthful clerk soon died out. In those days war and sedition supplied perpetual excitement, and to-day's drama extinguished yesterday's tragedy.

Maître Cornélius, more affected by the loss of so large a sum than by the death of his three retainers, now lived alone with the old woman who was his sister. He obtained from the King the privilege of using the state couriers for his private business, put up his mules with a muleteer in the neighborhood, and thenceforth lived in perfect solitude, seeing scarce anyone but the King, and transacting his business through the medium of the Jews—crafty arithmeticians, who served him faithfully for the sake of his omnipotent interest.

Some time after this event, the King himself placed with his old *torçonnier* a young orphan in whom he took a great interest. Louis XI. commonly called Maître Cornélius by the old name of *torçonnier,* which, in the reign of Saint-Louis, had meant an usurer, a tax-collector, a man who squeezed money out of folks by extortionate means. The word *tortionnaire,* a legal term still in use, in fact, explains the word *torçonnier,* which was often written *tortionneur.* This poor lad devoted himself to the goldsmith's interest, succeeded in satisfying his master and winning his favor. One winter's night the diamonds placed in Cornélius' keeping by the King of England were stolen, and suspicion fell on the orphan lad. Louis XI. was all the more severe with him because he had answered for his honesty. So, after a summary inquiry, the hapless boy was hanged before the Provost Marshal.

Nobody dared go to learn the arts of banking and exchange from Maître Cornélius. Nevertheless two young men of the town, youths of honor and anxious to win a fortune, one after the other entered his service. Large robberies from the treasurer's house at once ensued; the

circumstances of the crimes, and the way in which they were carried out, pointed clearly to some collusion between the thieves and the inmates of the house; it was impossible that the newcomers should escape accusation. The Fleming, more and more vindictive and suspicious, at once laid the matter before the King, who placed the cases in his Provost's hands. Each was promptly tried, and more promptly punished.

But the patriotism of the citizens was opposed to Tristan's swift proceedings. Guilty or no, the two young men were regarded as victims, and Cornélius as a ruffian. The two families thrown into mourning were persons in high esteem, their complaints met with sympathy, and step by step they succeeded in persuading everyone to believe in the innocence of all the men that the King's treasurer had sent to the gallows. Some declared that this cruel miser was imitating the King and trying to set terror and the gibbet between himself and the world; that he had never been robbed at all; that these horrible executions were brought about by cold self-interest; and that he only wanted to be quit of all alarms about his treasure.

The immediate result of these popular rumors was to isolate Cornélius. The good folks of Tours treated him as one plague-stricken, spoke of him as the extortioner, and called his house La Malemaison (the House of Ill). Even if the usurer could have found a youth bold enough to take service with him, the inhabitants of the town would have hindered it by their sayings. The most favorable opinions about Maître Cornélius were those expressed by men who regarded him only as a sinister personage. In some he inspired involuntary terrors, in others, the deep respect that is always paid to unlimited power or great wealth; to some he had the attraction of mystery. His mode of life, his countenance, and the King's favor justified every rumor of which he was the subject.

Since the death of his persecutor, the Duke of Burgundy, Cornélius frequently traveled in foreign parts, and during

his absence the King had his house guarded by a company of his Scottish guard. This royal care led the courtiers to suppose that the old man had left his fortune to Louis XI. The Fleming rarely went out; the gentlemen about the Court visited him frequently; he was ready enough to lend them money, but he was whimsical. On certain days he would not give them a sou *Parisis;* on the morrow he would offer them enormous sums, always at a high rate of interest and on good security. He was, however, a good Catholic, and attended the services regularly; but he went to Saint-Martin at a very early hour, and as he had purchased a chapel in perpetuity, there, as elsewhere, he was divided from other Christians.

A proverb which became popular at this period and survived at Tours for a long time was the saying: "You have crossed the usurer's path; woe will befall you." "You have crossed the usurer's path" accounted for sudden ailments, involuntary depression, and the evil turns of fortune. Even at Court Cornélius was credited with the fatal influence which, in Italy, Spain, and the East, superstition has named the Evil Eye.

But for the terrible power of Louis XI., which was extended like a shield over his house, the populace would, on the slenderest pretext, have demolished the Malemaison of the Rue du Mûrier. And yet it was by Cornélius that the first mulberry trees in Tours had been planted, and at that time the inhabitants had regarded him as a good genius. Who then may trust to popular favor?

Certain gentlemen who had met Maître Cornélius in foreign lands had been amazed by his good humor. At Tours he was constantly gloomy and absent-minded; but he always came back there. Some inexplicable attraction always brought him home to his dismal house in the Rue du Mûrier. Like the snail whose life is inseparable from that of his shell, he confessed to the King that he never felt so happy as behind the time-eaten stones, the bolts of his little bastille, albeit he knew that in the event of Louis' death it would be the most dangerous spot on earth to him.

"The devil is amusing himself at the expense of our friend the *torçonnier*," said Louis XI. to his barber, a few days before the festival of All Saints. "He complains of having been robbed again! But there is nobody this time for him to hang—unless he hangs himself. If the old vagabond did not come to ask me whether I had carried off by mistake a chain of rubies he had been meaning to sell me? By the Mass! I do not steal what I have only to take, said I."

"And was he frightened?" asked the barber.

"Misers are afraid but of one thing," replied the King. "My gossip the usurer knows full well that I should not flay him for nothing; otherwise I should be unjust, and I have never done anything that was not just and necessary."

"And yet the old hulk cheats you," replied the barber.

"You only wish that were true, heh?" said the King, with a cunning leer at the barber.

"Nay, Sire," replied the man, with an oath; "but there would be a snug fortune to divide between you and the devil."

"That will do," said the King. "Do not put mischief into my head. My gossip is a more faithful friend than all the men whose fortunes I have made—possibly because he owes me nothing."

Thus, for two years past, Cornélius lived alone with his sister, who was believed to be a witch. A tailor who lived hard by declared that he had often seen her at night waiting on the roof to fly off to her Sabbath. This statement was all the more extraordinary because the old miser shut his sister up in a room of which the windows were barred with iron.

Cornélius in his old age, fearing more and more that men should rob him, had conceived a hatred for all the world excepting the King, whom he esteemed highly. He had sunk into deep misanthropy; but, in his passion for gold, the assimilation of the metal with his very substance had become more and more complete, and, as is commonly the

case with misers, his avarice increased with age. He was suspicious even of his sister, though she was perhaps more avaricious and thrifty than himself, and outdid him in sordid inventiveness. There was something mysterious and questionable in their way of life. The old woman so rarely took bread from the baker, and was so seldom seen at market, that the least credulous observers had at last attributed to these strange beings the knowledge of some occult means of sustaining life. Some, who meddled in alchemy, said that Maître Cornélius could make gold. The learned declared that he had discovered the universal panacea. And to most of the country folk, when the townspeople spoke of him, he was a chimerical creature, so that they would come out of curiosity to stare at his house.

The young gentleman, sitting on a bench by the house facing that of Maître Cornélius, looked at the Malemaison and the Hôtel de Poitiers by turns. The moon shed high lights on the salient parts, lending color by the contrast of light and shade on the sculpture in relief. The play of this capricious pale light gave a somewhat sinister expression to both houses. Nature seemed to lend herself to the superstitious notions that hung about the place.

The gentleman recalled all the many traditions which made Cornélius an object at once of curiosity and dread. Though the vehemence of his passion confirmed him in his determination to get into the house and to stay there as long as might be necessary to carry out his projects, he hesitated before taking this final step, though well aware that he should do so. But who, in the critical hours of life, does not love to listen to presentiments and play see-saw, as it were, over the abyss of futurity? As a lover worthy of his love, the youth feared lest he should perish before the Countess' love should grace his life.

This secret hesitancy was so painfully absorbing that he did not feel the cold wind that blew round his legs and against the projecting masses of the houses. If he entered

the goldsmith's service, he must renounce his name, as he had already doffed his handsome garb as a nobleman. In the event of disaster, he could make no appeal to the privileges of his birth or the protection of his friends but at the cost of destroying the Comtesse de Saint-Vallier beyond all rescue. If the old lord suspected her of having a lover, he was capable of roasting her in an iron cage by a slow fire, of torturing her to death day by day in the depths of some dungeon.

As he looked down on the wretched clothes in which he was disguised, the gentleman was ashamed of his own appearance. To behold his black leather belt, his clumsy shoes, his wrinkled hose, his frieze breeches, and his gray cloth jerkin, he might be the follower of some mean sergeant of the law. To a nobleman of the fifteenth century it was as bad as death to play the part of pauper townsman and renounce the privileges of his rank. Still, to climb the roof of the mansion where his mistress sat weeping; to creep down the chimney or run along the parapet, crawling from gutter to gutter till he reached her window; to risk his life, if only he might sit by her side on a silken cushion, in front of a good fire, during the slumbers of that sinister husband, whose snore would enhance their rapture; to defy heaven and earth; to exchange the most audacious embrace; to speak words which would inevitably be punished by death, or at least by a bloody struggle,—all these enchanting visions, with the romantic perils of the adventure brought him to a decision. The smaller the prize of his endeavor,—were it only to be that he should once more kiss his lady's hand,—the more determined was he to dare everything, prompted by the chivalrous and impassioned spirit of the time. Then he did not really suppose that the Countess would dare to refuse him the sweetest reward of love, in the midst of such mortal dangers. The adventure was too perilous, too impossible, not to be carried through to the end.

At this juncture every bell in the town rang the curfew.

The law had fallen into disuse, but in the provinces the hour was still tolled, for customs die slowly in the country. Though the lights were not put out, the captains of the watch stretched chains across the streets. Many doors were bolted and barred; the steps of a few belated citizens were heard in the distance as they made their way, surrounded by their followers, armed to the teeth and carrying lanterns; and then, ere long, the town, gagged as it were, seemed to fall asleep, fearing no attack from malefactors, unless by way of the roof.

And at that time the house-tops were a recognized highway during the night. The streets were so narrow in country towns, and even in Paris, that robbers could jump from one side to the other. This dangerous game was a constant amusement to King Charles IX. in his youth, if we may believe the memoirs of the time.

Fearing to be too late in presenting himself to Maître Cornélius, the young gentleman was on the point of rising to knock at the door of the House of Evil, when, on looking at it, his attention was riveted by a sort of vision, such as the writers of the day would have called diabolical. He rubbed his eyes as if to clear them, and a thousand different emotions flashed through his brain. On each side of the door he beheld a face framed between the bars of a sort of loophole. At first he supposed these faces to be grotesque masks carved in stone, so wrinkled were they, so angular, twisted, exaggerated, and motionless; they were tanned,—that is to say, brown; but the cold and the moonlight enabled him to detect the slight white cloud of thin breath coming out of the two blue noses, and at last he could make out in each haggard face, under shaggy eyebrows, a pair of china-blue eyes that sparkled with a pale light, like those of a wolf crouching in a thicket when he hears the hounds in full cry. The uneasy gleam of those eyes rested so fixedly on him, that, after meeting it during the moment when he was studying these singular objects, he felt like a bird put up by a sporting dog; a fevered spasm

clutched at his heart, but was at once controlled. These two faces were beyond a doubt those of Cornélius and his sister.

The gentleman at once affected to be examining the street and to be in search of a dwelling of which the address was written on a card that he took out of his pocket, trying to read it by the moonlight; he then went straight up to the extortioner's door and gave three knocks, which echoed within the house as if this were the portal of a cellar. A small light became visible, and an eye was applied to a small and strongly barred wicket.

"Who is there?"

"A friend, sent by Oosterlinck of Bruges."

"What do you want?"

"To be let in."

"Your name?"

"Philippe Goulenoire."

"Have you letters of introduction?"

"Here they are."

"Put them in through the box."

"Where is it?"

"To the left."

Philippe Goulenoire put the letter into a slit in an iron chest below a loophole window.

"The devil!" thought he. "It is evident that the King comes here, for as many precautions are observed as he takes at Le Plessis."

He waited in the street about a quarter of an hour longer. At the end of that time he heard the old man say to his sister:

"Shut the traps inside the door."

Then a clatter of chains and iron echoed through the porch. Philippe heard bolts drawn and locks creak; finally a small, low door, sheathed with iron, opened so as to afford the smallest chink through which a man might squeeze. At the risk of tearing his clothes, Philippe crept rather than walked into the Malemaison. A toothless old woman with a face like a fiddle, and eyebrows like the handles of a

caldron, who could not have put a nut between the tip of her nose and her chin, colorless, sallow, with hollow temples and an appearance of being constructed of nothing but bone and sinew, silently led the stranger into a low sitting-room, while Cornélius prudently kept in the rear.

"Be seated there," said she to Philippe, pointing to a three-legged stool that stood in the corner of a huge chimney-place of carved stone, though there was no fire on the hearth.

On the opposite side of this fireplace was a walnut-wood table with twisted legs, on which there were an egg in a plate and ten or twelve hard strips of dry bread cut with parsimonious exactitude. Two stools, on one of which the old woman seated herself, showed that the good folks were in the act of supping.

Cornélius went to close two iron shutters, protecting the peepholes, no doubt, through which they had so long been gazing into the street; then he came back to his place. Philippe, as he called himself, now saw the brother and sister take it in turns, with perfect gravity, to dip a strip of bread into the egg, with the same precision as soldiers use in dipping their spoon into the tin pot; but they scarcely colored them, in order that the egg might last out the full allowance of strips of bread. This was performed in perfect silence.

While he ate, Cornélius studied the sham apprentice with as much care and shrewdness as if he had been made of gold bezants. Philippe, feeling an icy cloak fall on his shoulders, was tempted to look about him; but, with the prudence born of a love-adventure, he took care not to cast even a furtive glance at the walls, for he was well aware that if Cornélius saw him in the act he would not keep an inquisitive man in the house. So he restricted himself to fixing a modest eye now on the egg, now on the old maid, and anon he contemplated his future master.

Louis' treasurer resembled that monarch; he had even caught some of his tricks, as not unfrequently happens when people live together in intimacy. The Fleming's thick eye-

brows almost hid his eyes; but when he raised them a little his glance was bright, penetrating, and full of energy,—the look of men who are used to be silent, and to whom concentration of mind is a familiar habit. His thin lips, finely puckered with upright lines, gave him a keenly subtle expression. The lower part of his face, indeed, vaguely suggested a fox's muzzle; still, a lofty and prominent brow, deeply furrowed, seemed to reveal some great and fine qualities,—a noble soul whose flights had been checked by experience, while the bitter lessons of life had quenched it and thrust it down into the deepest secret places of this strange being. He was certainly no ordinary miser, and his passion no doubt covered intense joys and secret conceptions.

"At what rate are Venetian sequins doings?" he suddenly asked his intending apprentice.

"At three-quarters, at Bruges; at one, at Ghent."

"What is the freight on the Scheldt?"

"Three sous *Parisis.*"

"Nothing new in Ghent?"

"Liéven d'Herde's brother is ruined."

"Indeed!"

After allowing this exclamation to escape him, the old man covered his knees with the skirt of his dalmatic, a sort of robe of black velvet in front, with wide sleeves and no collar. The magnificent material was shiny with wear. This relic of the handsome dress he had been wont to wear as president of the tribunal of *Parchons*—a position which had brought upon him the Duke of Burgundy's enmity—was no more than a rag.

Philippe was not cold; he was bathed in sweat, trembling lest he should be required to answer any further questions. So far the brief information he had extracted the day before from a Jew, whose life he had once saved, had proved sufficient, thanks to his good memory, and to the Jew's thorough knowledge of the money-lender's manners and habits. But the young gentleman who, in the first flush of enterprise, had been full of confidence, now began to perceive the many

difficulties of the business. The terrible Fleming's solemn gravity and perfect coolness were telling on him. And besides, he felt himself under lock and key, and could picture all the Provost's cords at Maître Cornélius' command.

"Have you supped?" said the miser, in a tone which plainly meant "Do not sup."

In spite of her brother's tone the old woman was startled; she looked at their young inmate as if to gauge the capacity of the stomach she would be expected to fill, and then said with a false smile:

"You have not got your name for nothing, for your hair and moustache are blacker than the devil's tail."

"I have supped," replied he.

"Very well," said the miser; "then come to see me again to-morrow. I have long been accustomed to dispense with the services of an apprentice. Besides, the night brings good counsel."

"Nay, by Saint-Bavon! monsieur, I am from Flanders. I know nobody here, the chains are up. I shall be cast into prison. However," he added, frightened at the eagerness with which he had spoken, "of course, if it suits your convenience, I will go."

The oath had a strange effect on the old Fleming.

"Well, well. By Saint-Bavon! you shall sleep here."

"But——" his sister began in dismay.

"Silence," said Cornélius. "Oosterlinck, in his letter, answers for this youth. Have we not a hundred thousand livres in hand belonging to Oosterlinck?" he whispered in her ear; "and is not that good security?"

"And supposing he were to steal the Bavarian jewels? He looks far more like a thief than a Fleming."

"Hark!" exclaimed the old man, listening.

The two misers listened. Vaguely, an instant after the hush, a noise of men's steps was heard, far away on the further side of the city moat.

"It is the round of the watch at Le Plessis," said the sister.

"Come, give me the key of the apprentice's room," Cornélius went on.

The old maid was about to take up the lamp.

"What, are you going to leave us together without a light?" cried Cornélius, with evident meaning. "Cannot you move about in the dark at your age? Is it so difficult to find that key?"

The old woman understood the meaning behind these words, and went away.

As he looked after this extraordinary creature, just as she reached the door, Philippe Goulenoire could cast a furtive glance round the room unobserved by his master. It was wainscoted with oak half-way up, and the walls were hung with yellow leather, patterned with black; but what most struck him was a firelock musket with its long spring dagger attached. This new and terrible weapon lay close by Cornélius.

"How do you propose to earn your living?" asked the usurer.

"I have but little money," replied Goulenoire, "but I know some good trade recipes. If you will give me no more than a sou on every mark I earn for you, I shall be content."

"A sou! a sou!" cried the miser; "but that is a great deal."

Hereupon the old hag came in again.

"Come," said Cornélius to Philippe.

They went out into the entrance, and mounted a newel stair that ran up a turret close by the side of the living-room. On the first floor the young man paused.

"Nay, nay," said Cornélius. "The devil! why, these are the premises where the King takes his pleasure."

The architect had constructed the lodging for the apprentice under the conical roof of the staircase tower. It was a small circular room, with stone walls, cold and devoid of ornament. This tower stood in the middle of the front to the courtyard, which, as usual in provincial towns, was narrow and dark. Beyond and through the iron gratings of an arcade, there was a meagre garden, or rather a mulberry orchard, tended no doubt by Cornélius himself.

All this the youth could see through the loopholes in the

turret, by the light of the moon, which happily shone brightly. A truckle-bed, a stool, a stone pitcher, and a rickety chest formed the furniture of this cage. The light was admitted through tiny square slits at regular intervals below the outer cornice of the structure, forming its ornamentation, no doubt, in character with this pleasing style of architecture.

"Here is your room. It is simple and strong. There is everything needed for sleep. Good-night. Do not leave it as the others did."

After giving his new apprentice a parting glance fraught with many meanings, Cornélius locked and double-locked the door, and carried away the key. He went down-stairs again, leaving his man as much at his wit's end as a bell-founder who finds his mould empty. Alone, without a light, sitting on a stool in this little garret, which his four precursors had quitted only for the gallows, the young fellow felt like a wild animal caught in a sack. He sprang on to the stool, and stood on tiptoe to look out of the little loop-holes through which the white light came in. He could thence see the Loire, the beautiful hills of Saint-Cyr, and the gloomy splendor of Le Plessis, where a few lights twinkled from the deep-set windows. Further away lay the fair fields of Touraine and the silvery reaches of the great river. Every detail of the pleasing landscape had at this moment an unwonted charm. Window-panes, water-pools, the roofs of the houses, glittered like gems in the tremulous moonbeams.

The young man could not altogether suppress some sweet but painful feeling.

"If it should be for the last time," thought he.

And he stood there, already tasting the terrible emotion his adventure had promised, and abandoning himself to the fears of a prisoner who still has a gleam of hope. Every difficulty added to his mistress' beauty. She was to him no longer a woman, but a supernatural being, seen through the hot vapors of desire.

A faint cry, which he fancied proceeded from the Hôtel

de Poitiers, brought him to himself and to a sense of his situation. As he sat down on the bed to meditate on the matter, he heard a soft rustle on the winding stair. He listened with all his ears; and presently the words, "He is in bed," spoken by the old woman, reached his ear.

By an accident of which the architect was unaware, the least sound below was echoed in the turret room, so that the sham apprentice did not lose one of the movements of the miser and his sister, who were spying on him. He undressed, got into bed, and pretended to sleep, spending the time during which his two hosts remained on the watch on the turret steps, in devising the means for getting out of his prison and into the Hôtel de Poitiers. By about ten o'clock Cornélius and his sister, convinced that their apprentice was asleep, went to their own rooms.

The young man listened keenly to the dull remote sounds made by the Flemings, and fancied he could guess where they slept; they must, he thought, occupy the whole of the second floor.

As in all houses of that date, that floor was in the roof, with dormer windows richly ornamented with carved stone pediments. The roof was also edged by a sort of parapet, concealing the gutters for conducting the rain-water to the spouts, mimicking crocodiles' heads, which shed it into the street. The youth, who had studied his bearings as cunningly as a cat could have done, expected to find a means of getting from the tower on to the roof, and climbing along the gutter as far as Madame de Saint-Vallier's window, by the help of the water-spouts; but he had not known that the windows of the turret would be so small that it was impossible to pass through them. So he resolved to get out on the roof by the window that lighted the second-floor landing of the turret stair.

To execute this bold scheme, he must get out of his room, and Cornélius had the key. The young gentleman had taken the precaution of arming himself with one of the daggers, which were at this time in use for dealing the death-

blow, the *coup de grace*, in single combat, when the adversary prayed that it might end. This horrible weapon had one edge as sharp as a razor, and the other toothed like a saw, with the teeth turned in a contrary sense to the thrust as it entered the body. The youth now proposed to use this dagger as a saw to cut the lock out from the wooden door. Happily for him, the staple proved to be attached to the inner side of the lintel by four large screws. By the help of his poniard he succeeded, not without difficulty, in unscrewing the staple which kept him a prisoner, and he carefully laid the screws on the chest.

By midnight he was free, and crept down-stairs without his shoes to reconnoitre the ground. He was not a little surprised to find an open door to a passage leading to several rooms, and he saw at the end of it a window opening on to the V-shaped space between the roofs of the Hôtel de Poitiers and that of the Malemaison, which met here. Nothing could express his joy, unless it were the vow he forthwith made to the Holy Virgin to found a mass in her honor, at the famous parish church of Escrignoles. After studying from thence the tall and vast chimneys of the Hôtel de Poitiers, he went back again to fetch his weapon; but he now saw with a terrified shudder that there was a bright light on the stairs, and perceived Cornélius in his old dalmatic, carrying his lamp, his eyes wide open and fixed on the corridor, while he stood like a spectre at the entrance.

"If I open the window and leap out on the roof, he will hear me," thought the young man.

But the terrible Fleming was coming on—coming as the hour of death steals on the criminal. In this extremity, Goulenoire, his wits quickened by love, recovered his presence of mind; he shrank into the recess of a door, squeezing himself into the corner, and waited for the usurer to pass him. As soon as Cornélius, holding his lamp before him, was just at the angle where the youth could make a draught by blowing, he puffed out the light.

Cornélius muttered a Dutch oath and some incoherent

He now saw with a terrified shudder that there was a bright light on the stairs, and perceived Cornélius, in his old dalmatic, carrying his lamp

words; but he turned back. The gentleman then flew up to his room, seized his weapon, ran back to the thrice-blessed window, opened it cautiously, and sprang out on to the roof.

Once free and under the sky, he almost fainted with joy. The excitement of danger or the audacity of his enterprise perhaps caused his agitation; victory is often as full of risk as the battle. He leaned against a parapet, trembling with satisfaction, and asked himself:

"Now, by which of those chimneys can I get into her room?"

He looked at them all. With the instinct of a lover, he touched them by turns to feel in which there had been a fire. When he had made up his mind, the gallant youth fixed his dagger firmly in the joint between two stones, attached his rope-ladder, and threw it down the chimney; and then, without a qualm, trusting to his good blade, climbed down to his mistress. He knew not whether the Comte de Saint-Vallier were asleep or awake, but he was fully bent on clasping the Countess in his arms even if it should cost two men their life. He gently set foot on the still warm ashes; he yet more gently stooped down and saw the Countess seated in an armchair.

By the light of the lamp, pale and trembling with joy, the timid woman pointed to Saint-Vallier in bed, a few yards off. You may suppose that their burning and silent kiss found no echo but in their hearts.

By nine next morning, just as Louis XI. was coming out of chapel, after attending mass, he found Maître Cornélius in his path.

"Good luck, gossip," said he, curtly, as he pulled his cap straight.

"Sire, I will gladly pay a thousand gold crowns for a moment's speech of your Majesty, seeing that I have discovered the thief who stole the ruby chain and all the jewels."

"Let us hear this," said Louis XI., coming out into the courtyard of Le Plessis, followed by his treasurer, by

Coyctier his physician, by Olivier le Daim, and the captain of the Scottish Guard. "Tell me your business. We are to have another man hanged for you, then? Here, Tristan!"

The Provost Marshal, who was marching up and down the courtyard, came up slowly, like a dog proud of his fidelity. The group paused under a tree. The King sat down on a bench; the courtiers formed a circle round him.

"Sire, I have been fairly trapped by a pretended Fleming," said Cornélius.

"He must be a wily knave indeed, then," said the King, shaking his head.

"Ay, truly," replied the goldsmith. "But I am not sure that he might not have beguiled you even. How was I to suspect a poor wight recommended to me by Oosterlinck, a man for whom I hold a hundred thousand livres? Nay, but I will wager that the Jew's seal is a forgery. In short, Sire, this morning I found myself robbed of the jewels you admired for their beauty. They have been stolen from me, Sire! The Elector of Bavaria's jewels stolen! The villains respect no man. They would rob you of your kingdom if you were not on the alert. Forthwith I went up to the room where I had bestowed this apprentice, who is certainly a past master of thieving. This time proofs are not lacking. He had unscrewed the staple of the lock; but on his return, the moon having set, he could not lay hands on all the screws. Thus, by good hap, as I went in, I trod on a screw. He was asleep, the varlet, for he was tired out. Fancy this, gentlemen; he had descended into my room by the chimney. To-morrow, or rather this evening, I will have it hot for him. We always learn something from these villains. He had about him a silken ladder, and his clothes bear the traces of his traveling over the roofs and through the chimney. He thought to live with me and bring me to ruin, the bold varlet! Now, where has he buried the jewels? The country-folk saw him early in the morning coming back across the roofs. He had accomplices waiting for him on the dyke you made. Ah, my lord, you are yourself the accomplice of thieves who come in boats;

and, snap! they carry away what they will, and no traces left! However, we have the leader, a daring scapegrace, a rascal who would do credit to a gentleman's mother. Ay, he will look well hanging on a gibbet, and with a screw of the torture-chamber he will confess all. And is not this a matter for the honor of your rule? There should be no robbers under so great a King!"

But the King had long since ceased to listen. He was sunk in one of the gloomy moods that became frequent with him during the later years of his life. Silence reigned.

"This is your business man," said he at length, to Tristan. "Go and search out this matter."

He rose, and went forward a few steps; his courtiers left him to himself. He then perceived Cornélius, who, mounted on his mule, was going off in company with the Provost.

"And the thousand crowns?" said the King.

"Nay, Sire, you are too great a King! No sum of money could pay for your justice——"

Louis XI. smiled. The courtiers envied the old Fleming his bold tongue and many privileges; he rode off at a good pace, down the avenue of mulberry-trees that led from Le Plessis to Tours.

Exhausted by fatigue, the young gentleman was, in fact, sleeping soundly. On his return from his adventure of gallantry, he had ceased to feel such spirit and ardor for defending himself against distant and perhaps imaginary dangers, as had inspired him to rush on perilous delights. So he had postponed till morning the task of cleaning his soiled raiment and effacing the traces of his success. It was a great blunder, but one towards which everything tended. When, in the absence of the moon, which had set while he was happy with his love, he failed to find all the screws of the vexatious staple, he lost patience. Then, with the happy recklessness of a man full of contentment, or longing for rest, he trusted to the good luck of his fate, which had so far served him so well He did, indeed, make a sort of bargain with himself, in virtue of which he was to wake at daybreak; but the events of the

day and the excitements of the night hindered him from keeping the promise. Happiness is oblivious. The goldsmith seemed less formidable to the young gentleman as he lay on the hard truckle-bed whence so many of his predecessors had risen only to go to execution, and this recklessness was his undoing.

While the King's treasurer was on his way back from Plessis-les-Tours, escorted by the Provost and his terrible bowmen, the self-styled Goulenoire was being watched by the old sister, who sat knitting stockings for Cornélius on one of the steps of the turret stair, never heeding the cold.

The youth, meanwhile, was prolonging the joys of that enchanting night, ignorant of the disaster which was coming down on him at a gallop. He was dreaming. His dreams, like all the visions of youth, were so vividly colored that he was unconscious of where illusion began and reality ended. He saw himself on a cushion at the lady's feet; his head on her knees warm with affection; he was listening to the tale of the persecutions and petty tyranny the Count had so long inflicted on his wife; he wept with the Countess, who was, in fact, of all his natural children the daughter Louis XI. loved best; he promised her that he would go on the morrow and reveal all the facts to that terrible father. They had settled everything in their mind, annulling the marriage and imprisoning the husband, while they themselves might at any moment be the victims of his sword if the least sound had roused him. But in his dream the light of the lamp, the flame in their eyes, the hues of stuffs and tapestries, were brighter than in fact; a richer perfume exhaled from their night garments; there was more love in the air, more glow in the atmosphere, than there had been in reality. And the Marie of his dream was far less obdurate than the living Marie had been, to the languishing looks, the insinuating prayers, the magical questioning, the expressive silence, the voluptuous solicitation, the affected generosity which make the first moments of passion so fiercely ardent, and rouse lovers' souls to increased intoxication at each step in their love.

In accordance with the jurisprudence of love in those days Marie de Saint-Vallier granted her adorer the superficial privileges of *la petite oie;* that is to say, she willingly allowed him to kiss her feet, her robe, her hands, and her throat; she confessed her love; she accepted her lover's attentions and vows; she would permit him to die for her; she allowed herself to encourage an intoxication to which this half reserve, severe and often cruel as it was, gave added heat; but she was herself immovable, and would promise the highest reward of love only as the price of her deliverance. To annul a marriage in those days recourse to Rome was necessary. The parties needed the devotion of a few cardinals, and had to appear in the presence of the Sovereign Pontiff armed with the King's protection. Marie wished to owe her liberty to love, that she might resign it into love's hands.

In those days almost every woman had power enough so to establish her empire in the heart of a man as to make his passion the history of his whole life, the mainspring of the highest resolve. But then ladies could be numbered in France; they were so many sovereigns; they had a noble pride; their lovers belonged to them rather than they to the men; their love often cost much bloodshed, and to be accepted by them dangers had to be faced.

But in his dream Marie was merciful, and deeply touched by the devotion of her beloved, and she made little resistance to the handsome youth's vehement passion. Which was the real Marie? Did the so-called apprentice see the true woman in his dream? Was the lady he had found in the Hôtel de Poitiers merely wearing a mask of virtue? The question is a delicate one, and the honor of the ladies requires that it should remain undecided.

At the very moment when the dream-Marie was about perhaps to forego her high dignity as his mistress, the lover felt himself gripped by an iron hand, and the sharp tones of the Provost thus addressed him:

"Come, you midnight Christian, who go feeling about for heaven. Come, wake up!"

Philippe saw Tristan's swarthy face and recognized his sardonic smile; and then on the steps of the spiral stairs he saw Cornélius and his sister, and behind them the Provost's men-at-arms. At this sight, at the aspect of all those diabolical countenances expressing hatred or else the vile curiosity of men accustomed to the hangman's office, Philippe Goulenoire sat up in bed and rubbed his eyes.

"'Sdeath!" cried he, snatching his dagger from under his pillow. "It is time to be trying knife-play!"

"Oh, ho!" cried Tristan. "I smell the gentleman! It strikes me that we have here Georges d'Estouteville, nephew to the grand captain of the crossbowmen."

On hearing his true name proclaimed by Tristan, young d'Estouteville thought less of himself than of the danger his unhappy mistress would be in if he were recognized. To divert suspicion, he exclaimed:

"By all the devils, help! All good vagabonds, help!"

After this terrible outcry, uttered by a man who was absolutely desperate, the young courtier with one tremendous bound, poniard in hand, rushed out to the stairs. But the Provost's followers were used to such adventures. As soon as Georges d'Estouteville had reached the steps, they dexterously captured him, undaunted by the vigorous thrust he made at one of them, which fortunately slipped on the man's breastplate. They disarmed him, tied his hands, and threw him back on his bed under the eyes of their chief, who stood thoughtful and immovable.

Tristan silently examined the prisoner's hands, and scratching his chin he pointed them out to Cornélius, saying:

"Those are no more the hands of a robber than those of an apprentice. He is of noble birth."

"Say rather of ignoble earth," cried the Fleming, dolefully. "My good Tristan, whether he be noble or base-born, the villain has undone me. I would I might see him at this moment with his hands and feet toasting, or fitted into your neat little boots. He is beyond a doubt the captain of the invisible legion of devils who know all my secrets, open all my locks,

rob me, and kill me by inches. They are rich by now, my friend. Ah! But this time we will have their treasure, for this fellow looks like the King of Egypt. I shall get back my precious rubies and vast sums of money; our good King shall have his hands full of crowns."

"Oh, our hiding-places are safer than yours!" said Georges, smiling.

"Ah, the damned villain, he confesses!" exclaimed the miser.

The Provost Marshal, meanwhile, had been examining the prisoner's clothes and the lock.

"Was it you who unscrewed all those rivets?"

Georges made no reply.

"Oh, very well; hold your tongue if you like. You will confess presently to Saint-Rack-bones," said Tristan.

"Ah, now you talk sense!" cried Cornélius.

"Lead him away," said the Provost.

Georges d'Estouteville asked permission to dress. At a sign from their master, the men-at-arms dressed the prisoner with the dexterous rapidity of a nurse who takes advantage of a moment when her baby is quiet, to change its clothes.

A great crowd had collected in the Rue du Mûrier. Their murmurs grew louder every moment, and seemed to threaten a riot. Rumors of the theft had been rife in the town from an early hour. Popular sympathy was in favor of the apprentice, who was said to be young and good-looking, and there was a general revival of hatred against Cornélius; so there was never a good mother's son, nor a young woman blest with neat feet and a rosy face, who was not eager to see the victim. There was a fearful uproar as soon as Georges appeared in the street, led by one of the Provost's men who, though mounted on a horse, held the strong leather thong by which the prisoner was secured, twisted round his arm, while the young man's hands were tightly tied. Whether it was merely to see Philippe Goulenoire, or in the hope of a rescue, those behind pushed those in front close up to the

guard of cavalry posted outside the Malemaison. At this instant Cornélius and his sister slammed the door and closed the shutters with the vehemence of panic terror. Tristan, who was not accustomed to respect the populace, saw that the mob was not yet master, and cared not a straw for any riot.

"Push on, push on!" said he to his men.

At their master's word the bowmen urged their horses towards the end of the street. And then, seeing two or three inquisitive mortals fallen under the horses' feet, and some others crushed against the walls where they were being stifled, the crowd that had collected took the wiser part and went home again.

"Make way for the King's justice!" cried Tristan. "What business have you here? Do you want to be hanged, too? Go home, good folks, your roast meat is burning! Now then, goodwife, your husband's hose need mending; go back to your needle."

Although these facetious remarks showed that the Provost was in high good humor, the most daring fled from him as if he were the Black Death. Just as the crowd began to give way, Georges d'Estouteville was startled to see, at one of the windows of the Hôtel de Poitiers, his beloved Marie de Saint-Vallier, laughing with the Count. She was laughing at him, the unhappy, devoted lover, who was going to death for her sake. Nay, perhaps she only was amused by those in the crowd whose caps had been knocked off by the archer's accoutrements.

A man must be three and twenty and rich indeed in illusions, must dare to trust in a woman's love, must love with all the powers of his being, and, after risking his life with joy on the faith of a kiss, must feel himself betrayed, ere he can understand the rage, hatred, and despair that surged up in the young man's soul as he saw his mistress laughing and vouchsafing him only a cold and indifferent glance. She had, no doubt, been there some time, for her arms rested on a cushion. She was evidently quite com-

fortable, and her old ogre quite content. He was laughing, too,—curse him for a hunchback!

A tear or two trickled from the young man's eyes; but when Marie saw them, she hastily drew back. And suddenly Georges' eyes were dry, for he descried the red and black feathers of the page who was devoted to him.

The Count did not observe the movements of that cautious servant, who came in on tiptoe. The page spoke a word in his mistress' ear, and then Marie came back to the window. She contrived to evade the watchful eye of her tyrant long enough to flash a look at her lover—the look of a woman who has skilfully deceived her Argus—bright with the fires of love and the triumph of hope.

"I am watching over you." If she had shouted the words, it could not have expressed so many things as this glance, embodying a thousand thoughts, and charged with the alarms, the joys, the perils, of their situation. It bore him from heaven to martyrdom, and from martyrdom to heaven. And so the young man, light-hearted and content, marched on to execution, counting the anguish of the torture-chamber as a small price for the raptures of love.

As Tristan was turning out of the Rue du Mûrier, his men drew up at the presence of an officer of the Scottish Guard, who rode up at full tilt.

"What is to do?" asked the Provost.

"Nothing that concerns you," replied the officer, scornfully. "The King has sent me to summon the Comte and Comtesse de Saint-Vallier, whom he bids to dine at his table."

Hardly had the Provost reached the quay of Le Plessis when the Count and his wife, both riding, she on a white mule and he on his horse, and followed by two pages, came up with the bowmen to enter the precincts of the château in their company. The whole party went but slowly. Georges was on foot, between two men-at-arms, one of whom still led him by the thong.

Tristan, the Count, and his wife naturally led the van,

and the criminal came behind. The younger page, mingling with the bowmen, was questioning them, or from time to time addressing the prisoner; and he cleverly seized an opportunity to say in an undertone:

"I climbed over the garden wall of Le Plessis, and carried a letter that madame had written to the King. She thought she would have died when she heard that you were accused of theft. Be of good courage; she will speak for you."

Love had already lent the Countess courage and craft. When she had laughed, her attitude and mirth were due to the heroism women can display in the great crises of life.

Notwithstanding the singular caprice which led the author of *Quentin Durward* to place the château of Plessis-les-Tours on a height, we are compelled to leave it where it really stood at that time, in a hollow, protected on two sides by the Cher and the Loire, and again by the canal, named by Louis XI. the Canal Sainte-Anne in honor of his favorite daughter, Madame de Beaujeu. By uniting the two rivers between Tours and Le Plessis, this canal was at once a formidable protection to the stronghold and a valuable highway for trade. On the side next to the broad and fertile plain of Bréhémont, the park was enclosed behind a moat, of which the enormous width and depth are sufficiently shown by what remains.

Thus, at a period when the power of artillery was in its infancy, the position of Le Plessis, long since chosen by Louis XI. as his favorite retreat, might be regarded as impregnable. The château itself was built of brick and stone, and not in any way remarkable, but it was surrounded by fine groves, and from its windows, through the alleys of the park (*Plexitium*), the loveliest views possible could be seen. And no rival mansion was to be found anywhere near this lovely palace standing exactly in the middle of the little plain enclosed for the King within four effectual bulwarks of water. If tradition may be trusted, Louis XI. occupied the western wing, and he could from his room see at once the course of the Loire, and beyond the river the

pretty valley watered by the Choisille, and part of the hills of Saint-Cyr; from the windows overlooking the courtyard he commanded the entrance to his fortress, and the quay by which his favorite residence was connected with the city of Tours. The King's suspicious temper gives weight to this tradition. And certainly, if Louis XI. had but lavished in the building of this palace such architectural magnificence as François I. afterwards indulged at Chambord, the home of the kings of France would have been permanently fixed in Touraine. This beautiful spot, and its lovely scenery, have only to be seen to prove its superiority over the situation of any other royal residence.

Louis XI., now in his fifty-seventh year, had scarcely three more years to live, and was already made aware of the approach of death by attacks of illness. Delivered now from his enemies, and on the eve of adding to the kingdom of France all the possessions of the duchy of Burgundy, by means of a marriage, arranged by Desquerdes, the captain-general of his army in Flanders, between the Dauphin and Marguerite, sole heiress of Burgundy; having secured his authority in every part of his realm, while still planning wise improvements, he saw time slipping from his grasp, nothing left to him but the troubles of advancing years. Deceived by everybody, even by his creatures, experience had increased his natural distrustfulness. The desire to live had become in him the egoism of a king who had made himself one incarnate with his people, and who craved for long life to carry out vast schemes.

Everything that the good sense of public-spirited statesmen or the instinct of revolution has since achieved in reforming the monarchy, Louis XI. had thought out. Equality of taxation, and that of all subjects in the eye of the Law—the Sovereign was the Law then—were objects he boldly strove for. On the day before All Saints he had assembled certain learned goldsmiths to establish uniform weights and measures throughout France, as he had already established uniform authority. Thus his great mind soared

eagle-like above the whole kingdom, and Louis XI. added to the cautiousness of a king the eccentricities that are natural to men of lofty genius.

So grand a figure would at no period have appeared more poetical or more dignified. A strange mixture of contrasts! A great will in a feeble frame; a mind incredulous as to earthly things, credulous as concerned religious practices; a man combating two forces greater than himself—the present and the future: the future, when he dreaded to endure torment, which made him sacrifice so largely to the Church; the present, his actual life, for whose sake he was a slave to Coyctier. This King, who could crush whom he would, was crushed by remorse, and yet more by sickness, in the midst of all the mysterious prestige that enwraps a suspicious king, in whom all power centres.

It was the stupendous and always impressive struggle of man in the fullest expression of his power, rebelling against nature.

While waiting till the dinner hour, at that time between eleven o'clock and noon, Louis XI., after a short walk, was sitting in a large tapestried armchair in the chimney-corner of his own room. Olivier le Daim and Coyctier, the leech, looked at each other without a word, standing in a window-bay, and respecting their master's slumbers. The only sound to be heard was that made in the ante-room by the two chamberlains-in-waiting, as they paced to and fro; the Sire de Montrésor and Jean Dufou, Sire de Montbazon. These two, gentlemen of the Touraine, kept an eye on the captain of the Scottish Guard, who was probably asleep in his chair, as was his custom.

The King seemed to be dozing; his head was sunk on his breast; his cap, pulled over his brow, almost concealed his eyes. Thus huddled in his raised throne, which was surmounted by a crown, he looked like a man who had fallen asleep in the midst of some deep calculation.

At this moment Tristan and his party were crossing the

bridge of Sainte-Anne over the canal, at about two hundred paces from the entrance to the château.

"Who goes there?" asked the King.

The courtiers looked inquiringly at each other in surprise.

"He is dreaming," whispered Coyctier.

"*Pasques Dieu!*" cried the King. "Do you take me for a fool? Somebody is coming across the bridge. To be sure, I am sitting by the chimney, and of course can hear the sound more clearly than you can. That natural effect might be utilized——"

"What a man!" said Olivier le Daim.

Louis XI. rose and went to the window, whence he could look out on the town; then he saw the High Provost, and exclaimed:

"Ah ha! Here is my old gossip with his thief. And there, too, comes my little Marie de Saint-Vallier. I had forgotten that little matter. Olivier," he went on, addressing the barber, "go and tell Monsieur de Montbazon to put us some fine Burgundy on the table; and see that the cook gives us lampreys. Madame la Comtesse dearly likes them both. May I eat lampreys?" he added after a pause, with an uneasy look at Coyctier.

His attendant's only reply was to examine his master's face. The two men made a picture.

History and romance have consecrated the brown camlet overcoat, and trunks of the same material worn by Louis XI. His cap, garnished with pewter medals, and his collar of the Order of Saint-Michael, are no less famous; but no writer, no painter, has ever shown us the terrible King's face in his later days: a sickly face, hollow, yellow, and tawny, every feature expressive of bitter cunning and icy irony. There was, indeed, a noble brow to this mask, a brow furrowed with lines and seamed with lofty thought, but on his cheeks and lips a singularly vulgar and common stamp. Certain details of that countenance would have led to the conclusion that it belonged to some debauched old vine-grower, some miserly tradesman; but then, through these

vague suggestions and the decrepitude of a dying old man, the King flashed out, the man of power and action. His eyes, pale and yellow, looked extinct; but a spark lurked within of courage and wrath, which at the least touch would flame up into consuming fires.

The physician was a sturdy citizen, dressed in black, with a florid, keen, and greedy face, giving himself airs of importance.

The setting of these two figures was a room paneled with walnut wood, and hung with fine Flemish tapestry above the wainscot; the ceiling, supported on carved beams, was already blackened by smoke. The furniture and bedstead, inlaid with arabesques in white metal, would seem more valuable now than they really were at that time, when the arts were beginning to produce so many masterpieces.

"Lamprey is very bad for you," replied the physician.*

"What am I to eat, then?" the King humbly asked.

"Some widgeon, with salt. Otherwise you are so full of bile that you might die on All Souls' day."

"To-day?" cried the King, in great alarm.

"Oh, be easy, Sire, I am here," replied Coyetier. "Try not to fret, and amuse yourself a little."

"Ah," said the King, "my daughter used to be skilled in that difficult art."

Just then Imbert de Bastarnay, Sire de Montrésor and de Bridoré, gently knocked at the royal door. By the King's leave he came in, announcing the Comte and Comtesse de Saint-Vallier. Louis nodded. Marie entered the room, followed by her old husband, who allowed her to precede him.

"Good-day, my children," said the King.

"Sire," said the lady in a whisper, as she embraced him, "I would fain speak with you in private."

Louis XI. made as though he had not heard her.

"Dufou, hola!" cried he, in a hollow voice.

* *Le physicien:* this word then lately substituted for *maître myrrhe* (or leech) has been retained in English. It was generally used in France at that time.—*Balzac.*

Dufou, Lord of Montbazon and high cupbearer of France, hastened in.

"Go to the steward: I must have a widgeon for dinner. Then go to Madame de Beaujeu and tell her that I dine alone to-day. Do you know, madame," the King went on, affecting some little anger, "that you neglect me? It is nearly three years since I saw you last. Come, come hither, pretty one," he added, sitting down and holding out his arms to her. "How thin you are! What do you do to make her so thin? Heh?" he suddenly asked, turning to the Count.

The jealous wretch gave his wife such a pathetic look that she was almost sorry for him.

"It is happiness, Sire," he replied.

"Oh, ho! You are too fond of each other," said the King, holding his daughter upright on his knees. "Well, well, I see I was right, then, when I called you Marie-pleine-de-Grace. Coyctier, leave us! Now, what do you want of me?" he added, to his daughter, as the leech disappeared. "When you sent me your——"

In such peril Marie audaciously laid her hand on the King's mouth, and said in his ear:

"I always thought you secret and keen-witted——"

"Saint-Vallier," said the King, laughing, "I believe that Bridoré has something to say to you."

The Count left the room; but he shrugged one shoulder in a way his wife knew only too well; she could guess the jealous monster's thoughts, and concluded that she must be on her guard against his malignancy.

"Now tell me, child, how do you think I am looking? Am I much altered?"

"Gramercy, my lord, do you want the truth? Or shall I speak you fair?"

"No," said he, in a husky voice, "I want to know where I stand."

"In that case, you look but ill to-day. But I trust my truthfulness may not mar the success of my business."

"What is it?" asked the King, passing one of his hands over his knitted brows.

"Well, Sire," said she, "the young man who has been arrested in the house of your treasurer Cornélius, and who is at this present in the hands of your Provost Marshal, is innocent of stealing the jewels of Bavaria."

"How do you know?" asked the King.

Marie hung her head, and blushed.

"I need not ask if there is a love-affair at the bottom of this," said Louis XI., gently raising his daughter's face, and stroking her chin. "If you do not confess every morning, child, you will go to hell."

"And cannot you oblige me without violating my secret thoughts?"

"What would be the pleasure of that?" exclaimed the King, seeing that there might be some amusement in the matter.

"Oh, but you would not wish your pleasure to cost me sorrow?"

"Heh! sly puss, do not you trust me?"

"Well, then, my lord, set this young gentleman free."

"Oh, ho! So he is a gentleman!" cried the King. "Then he is not an apprentice?"

"He is most certainly innocent," said she.

"I do not see it in that light," said the King, coldly. "I am the supreme judge in my kingdom, and it is my duty to punish malefactors."

"Nay, come, do not put on your considering face. Grant me the young man's life!"

"Would not that be giving you back what is your own?"

"Sire," said she, "I am honest and virtuous. You are mocking me."

"Well, then," said the King, "as I cannot see my way in this business, let Tristan throw some light upon it."

Marie de Sassenage turned pale. With a violent effort she said:

"Sire, I assure you that you will be in despair if you do

The so-called thief has stolen nothing. If you will promise me his pardon, I will tell you everything, even if you should visit it on me."

"Oh, ho! This looks serious," said Louis XI., setting his cap aside. "Speak, my child."

"Well," said she, in a low voice, and speaking with her lips close to her father's ear, "the gentleman spent the night in my room."

"He may have gone to see you, and yet have robbed Cornélius—a double larceny."

"Sire, I have your blood in my veins, and I am not the woman to love a vagabond. This gentleman is the nephew of the captain-general of your crossbowmen."

"Go on," said the King. "It is very hard to get anything out of you."

As he spoke, Louis flung his daughter off to some distance; and she stood trembling while he ran to the door into the next room, but on tiptoe, and without making a sound. A moment since the light from a window in the outer room, shining beneath the door, had shown him the shadow of a pair of feet close to the entrance. He suddenly opened the iron-bound door, and surprised the Comte de Saint-Vallier, who was listening.

"*Pasques Dieu!*" cried he "this is such insolence as deserves the axe."

"My liege," said Saint-Vallier, boldly, "I would rather have the axe at my neck than the ornament of the married on my forehead."

"You may live to have both," said the King. "Not a man of you all is secure against those two misfortunes, my lords. Go into the farther ante-room. Conyngham," he went on, addressing the Scottish captain, "were you asleep? And where is Monsieur Bridoré? Do you allow me to be thus invaded? *Pasques Dieu!* the plainest citizen in Tours is better served than I am."

Having thus vented his anger, Louis came back into his room; but he took care to draw the tapestry curtains which

covered the door on the inner side, less for the purpose of moderating the cold draught than of smothering the King's words.

"And so, daughter," said he, amusing himself by teasing her, as a cat plays with a mouse it has caught, "Georges d'Estouteville was your gallant yesterday?"

"Oh, no, Sire!"

"No? Then by Saint-Carpion! he deserves to die. The villain did not think my daughter fair enough perhaps."

"Oh, if that is all," said she, "I assure you he kissed my feet and hands with such ardor as might have melted the most virtuous wife. He loves me, but honestly, as a gentleman should."

"And do you take me for Saint-Louis that you foist such a tale on me? A youngster of that pattern would have risked his life to kiss your slippers or your sleeve! Nay, nay——"

"Ay, my lord, but it is true. Still he came for another reason."

As she spoke, it struck Marie that she had imperiled her husband's life, for Louis at once eagerly inquired:

"For what?"

The adventure was amusing him hugely. He certainly did not expect the strange revelations now made by his daughter, after stipulating for her husband's pardon.

"Oh, ho! Monsieur de Saint-Vallier, so this is the way you draw the blood royal!" cried the King, his eyes blazing with wrath.

At this moment the bell of Le Plessis rang to call the King's escort to arms. Leaning on his daughter's arm, Louis XI. appeared on the threshold and found his guard in attendance. He first glanced dubiously at the Comte de Saint-Vallier, considering the sentence he was about to pronounce on him.

The deep silence was broken by Tristan's footsteps coming up the grand stairs. He came into the room, and advancing to the King said:

"Sire, the matter is settled!"

"What, all over?" said the King.

"Our man is in the priest's hands. He confessed to the theft after a screw of the rack."

The Countess sighed and turned pale; she could not even command her voice as she looked at the King. This glance was not lost on Saint-Vallier, who said in an undertone:

"I am undone. The thief is known to my wife!"

"Silence!" cried the King. "There is some one here of whom I am tired. Go quickly and stop the execution," he added, turning to the Provost. "You will answer to me for the criminal; your life for his, my friend! This affair must be thoroughly searched out, and I reserve the judgment. Provisionally, set the prisoner at large. I shall know where to find him; these robbers have hiding-places that they love, dens where they lurk. Make it known to Cornélius that I purpose going to his house this very evening to conduct the inquiry. Monsieur de Saint-Vallier," the King went on, fixing his eyes on the Count, "I have heard of all your doings. All the blood in your body cannot pay for one drop of mine; do you know that? By our Lady of Clery, you have been guilty of high treason. Did I give you so sweet a wife that you might make her pale and haggard? Marry, my lord! You go to your own house at this moment, and make you ready there for a long journey."

The mere habit of cruelty made the King pause on these words, but he presently added:

"You will set forth this night to treat of my business with the Signors of Venice. Do not be uneasy; I will bring your wife home with me this evening to my château of Le Plessis; there, at least, she will be safe. Henceforth I shall take better care of her than I have done since you wedded her."

Marie, as she heard these words, silently pressed her father's arm to thank him for his clemency and good grace. As to Louis, he was laughing in his sleeve.

Louis XI. dearly loved to interfere in his subjects' concerns, and was ever ready to mingle in his own royal per-

son in scenes of middle-class life. This fancy, severely blamed by some historians, was no more than the passion for the *incognito* which is one of the chief amusements of princes, a sort of temporary abdication which enables them to bring a breath of work-a-day life into an existence which is insipid for lack of opposition; but then Louis XI. played it an *incognito* without any disguise. In this sort of adventures, too, he was always good-humored, and did his utmost to be pleasant to the citizen class, of whom he had made friends and allies against the feudal lords.

It was now some little time since he had an opportunity of thus making himself popular, or taking up the defence of a man enmeshed in some actionable offence, so he was ready to enter vehemently into Maître Cornélius' alarms and the Countess' secret griefs.

Several times during dinner he said to his daughter:

"But who can have robbed my old gossip? He has lost more than twelve hundred thousand crowns' worth of jewels, stolen within the last eight years. Twelve hundred thousand crowns, my lords," he repeated, looking round on the gentlemen in attendance. "By our Lady, for such a sum of money a great many absolutions may be bought of the Court of Rome. I could have embanked the Loire for the money, or, better still, have conquered Piedmont—a fine bulwark, ready made, for our kingdom."

When dinner was ended, Louis XI. led away his daughter, his physician, and the Provost Marshal, and made his way with an escort of his guard to the Hôtel de Poitiers, where, as he had expected, he found the Comte de Saint-Vallier, who was awaiting his wife, perhaps to get rid of her.

"Monsieur," said the King, "I had instructed you to depart as soon as possible. Take leave of your wife and get across the frontier; you will be granted an escort of honor. As to your instructions and letters of credit, they will be at Venice sooner than you."

Louis gave his orders, adding certain secret instructions,

to a lieutenant of the Scottish Guard, who was to take a company and attend his envoy to Venice. Saint-Vallier went off in great haste, after giving his wife a cold kiss, which he would gladly have rendered fatal.

As soon as the Countess had retired to her room, Louis proceeded to the Malemaison, very anxious to see the end of the dismal farce that was going on under his gossip the usurer's roof, and flattering himself that, being the King, he would have keen wit enough to detect the robbers' secrets.

It was not without apprehension that Cornélius saw his master's company.

"And are all these folks part of the ceremony?" he asked in a low voice. Louis could not help smiling at the terrors of the old miser and his sister.

"No, gossip," replied he, "be quite easy. They will sup with us at my house; we shall go into the matter alone. I am such a good justiciary that I wager ten thousand crowns I find the criminal."

"Let us find him, my lord, and never mind the wager."

They went into the closet where the Fleming stored his treasures. Here King Louis, having first examined the case which had contained the Elector of Bavaria's jewels, and then the chimney down which the thief was supposed to have come, easily proved to the goldsmith that his suspicions were unfounded, inasmuch as there was no soot on the hearth—where, indeed, a fire was rarely kindled—and no trace of any kind in the chimney. Moreover, the chimney opened to a part of the roof that was practically inaccessible. Finally, after two hours spent in investigations characterized by the sagacity which distinguished the King's distrustful temper, it was proved to a demonstration that no one could have got into the miser's treasury. There was no mark of violence on any of the locks, inside or out, nor on the iron coffers containing his gold and silver and the costly jewels pledged by wealthy borrowers.

"If the robber opened this hoard," said Louis XI., "why did he take only the Bavarian jewels? Why should he have left this pearl necklace? A strange thief, indeed!"

At this reflection the hapless miser turned pale; the King and he eyed each other for a moment.

"Well, then, my liege, what was the robber doing whom you have taken under your protection, and who certainly was out during the night?"

"If you have not guessed, master, I desire that you never will; it is one of my secrets."

"Then the devil haunts me!" said the goldsmith, lamentably.

Under any other circumstances the King would have laughed at his treasurer's exclamation; but he stood thinking and gazing at Maître Cornélius with the scrutiny familiar to men of genius and authority, as if he could see into the man's brain. The Fleming, in fact, was terrified, thinking he had offended his formidable master.

"Angel or devil, I will have the malefactor!" the King suddenly exclaimed. "If you are robbed this night, I will know by whom to-morrow. Call up that old ape, your sister," he added.

Cornélius almost hesitated to leave the King alone in the room that contained his treasure; however, he went, coerced by the strength of the bitter smile that curled Louis' faded lips. And in spite of his confidence, he soon returned, followed by the old woman.

"Have you any flour?" asked the King.

"To be sure! we have laid in our store for the winter," said she.

"Well, then, bring it here," said the King.

"And what would you be doing with out flour, Sire?" cried she in alarm, and not in the least awed by the presence of majesty, like all persons possessed by a ruling passion.

"You old fool, will you do as our gracious liege bids you?" cried Cornélius. "Does the King want your flour?"

"This is what I buy fine flour for," muttered she, on the stairs. "Oh, my good flour!"

She turned back to say to the King:

"Is it your royal whim, my lord, to examine my flour?"

But at last she returned with one of the linen bags, which from time immemorial have been used in Touraine for carrying provisions to or from market—walnuts, fruit, or corn. This sack was half full of flour. The housewife opened it, and timidly showed it to the King, looking at him with the swift stolen glances by which old maids, as it would seem, hope to cast venom on a man.

"It is worth six sous the measure," said she.

"What matter!" replied the King. "Sprinkle it on the floor, and above all strew it very evenly, as if there had been a light fall of snow."

The old woman did not understand. The order dismayed her more than the end of the world could have done.

"My flour, my liege—on the floor—why——"

Maître Cornélius, who had an inkling, though a vague one, of the King's idea, snatched the bag, and sprinkled the flour gently on the boards. The old woman shuddered, and held out her hand for the bag; as soon as her brother restored it to her, she vanished with a deep sigh.

Cornélius took a feather broom and began spreading the flour with it over the floor till it lay like a sheet of snow, walking backwards towards the door, followed by the King, who seemed greatly amused by the proceedings. When they were at the threshold, Louis XI. said to his gossip:

"Are there two keys to the lock?"

"No, Sire."

The King examined the structure of the door, which was strengthened by large iron plates and bars. All the parts of this armor centered round a lock with a secret, of which Cornélius alone had the key. After investigating it thoroughly, Louis sent for Tristan, and bid him to set a watch with the utmost secrecy that night, some in the mulberry-trees on the quay, and on the parapets of the neighboring houses; but first to collect all his men to escort him back to Le Plessis, so as to make it appear that he, the King, was not supping with Maître Cornélius. Then he desired the miser to be so particular in closing every window, that not

a glimmer of light could pierce through, and to order a light meal, so as not to give a hint that His Majesty was sleeping there that night.

The King set out in state by the dyke road and returned privily, with only two attendants, by the rampart gate to the house of his friend the miser. Everything was so well arranged that all the townsfolk and courtiers supposed that the King had chosen to go back to the château, and would sup with the treasurer on the morrow. The miser's sister confirmed this notion by buying some green sauce from the best maker, whose shop was close to the *quarroir aux herbes,* since called the carroir de Beaune, in honor of a splendid white marble fountain which the unfortunate Semblançay (Jacques de Beaune) sent for from Italy to adorn the capital of his province.

At about eight in the evening, when the King was at supper with his leech, Cornélius and the captain of the Scottish Guard, talking gayly and forgetting that he was Louis XI. and ill, and almost dying, perfect silence reigned outside, and the passers-by, nay, even a thief, might have supposed the dwelling to be uninhabited.

"I hope," said the King, laughing, "that my gossip may be robbed this night, to satisfy my curiosity. And see to it, gentlemen, that no one leaves his chamber to-morrow morning without my orders, under pain of serious punishment."

Thereupon they all went to bed.

Next morning Louis XI. was the first to leave his room, and he made his way towards Cornélius' treasure-room. He was not a little surprised to detect the prints of a large foot on the stairs and in the passages of the house. Carefully avoiding these precious marks, he went to the door of the miser's closet and found it locked, with no traces of violence. He examined the direction of the footprints, but as they gradually grew fainter and at last left no mark, it was impossible to discover how the robber had escaped.

"Ah ha! gossip," cried the King to Cornélius, "you have been robbed, that is very certain!"

At these words the old Fleming came out, a prey to evident horror. Louis XI. led him to look at the footprints on the boards, and while examining them once more, the King, having by chance observed the miser's slippers, recognized the shape of the sole of which so many copies were stamped on the flooring. He said not a word, and suppressed a laugh, remembering how many innocent men had been hanged.

Cornélius hurried into his strong room. The King, bidding him make a fresh footprint by the side of those already visible, convinced him that the thief was none other than himself.

"The pearl necklace is missing!" cried Cornélius. "There is witchcraft in this. I have not left my room."

"We will find out about that at once," said the King, puzzled by the goldsmith's evident good faith.

He called the men of the watch into his room and asked them:

"Marry now, what did you see in the night?"

"Ah, Sire! a magical sight!" replied the lieutenant. "Your Majesty's treasurer stealing down-stairs close to the wall, and so nimbly that at first we took him for a spectre."

"I!" cried Cornélius, who then stood silent and motionless as a paralyzed creature.

"You may go, all of you," said Louis, addressing the bowmen, "and tell Monsieur Coyngham, Coyctier, Bridoré, and Tristan that they may get out of bed and come here. You have incurred pain of death," said Louis, coldly, to the miser, who, happily, did not hear him, "for you have at least ten on your soul!"

The King laughed, a grim, noiseless laugh, and paused.

"But be easy," he went on, as he noticed the strange pallor that overspread the old man's face; "you are better to bleed than to kill. And in consideration of a handsome fine, paid into my coffers, you may escape the clutches of justice; but

if you do not build at least a chapel to the Virgin, you are in jeopardy of finding warm and anxious work before you for all eternity."

"Twelve hundred and thirty and eighty-eight thousand crowns make thirteen hundred and seventeen thousand crowns," replied Cornélius, mechanically, absorbed in calculations. "Thirteen hundred and seventeen thousand crowns misappropriated!"

"He must have buried them in some hidden spot," said the King, who was beginning to think the sum a royal prize. "This is the lodestone that has always attracted him hither—he smelt his gold."

Hereupon Coyctier came in. Noticing the treasurer's attitude, he watched him keenly while the King was relating the adventure.

"My lord," replied the physician, "there is nothing supernatural in the business. Our friend here has the peculiarity of walking in his sleep. This is the third case I have met with of this singular malady. If you should be pleased to witness its effects, you might see this old man walking without danger on the parapet of the roof any night when he should be seized by it. In the two men I have already studied, I discovered a curious connection between the instincts of this nocturnal vitality and their business or occupations by day."

"Ah, Maître Coyctier, you are indeed most learned!"

"Am I not your physician?" retorted the leech, insolently.

On this reply Louis XI. made a little movement which was a familiar trick with him when he had hit on a good idea—a gesture of hastily pushing his cap up.

"In such cases," Coyctier went on, "men transact their business in their sleep. As our friend here is not averse to hoarding, he has quietly yielded to his favorite habit. Indeed, he probably has an attack whenever, during the day, he has been in alarm for his treasure."

"*Pasques Dieu!* and what a treasure!" cried the King.

"Where is it?" asked Cornélius, who, by a singular pecu-

liarity of our nature, heard all that the King and his leech were saying, though almost stunned by his reflections and his misfortune.

"Oh!" replied Coyctier, with a coarse, diabolical laugh, "somnambulists have no recollection of their acts and deeds when they awake."

"Leave us!" said the King.

When Louis XI. was alone with his gossip, he looked at him with a cold chuckle.

"Worshipful Master Hoogworst," said he, bowing low, "all treasure-trove in France belongs to the King."

"Yes, my liege, it is all yours; and our lives and fortunes are in your hands; but hitherto you have been so merciful as to take no more than you found necessary."

"Listen to me, gossip. If I help you to recover this treasure, you may, in all confidence and without fear, divide it with me."

"No, Sire, I will not divide it. It shall be all yours, when I am dead. But what scheme have you for finding it?"

"I have only to watch you, myself, while you are taking your nocturnal walks. Any one but myself would be a danger."

"Ah, Sire," replied Cornélius, falling at the King's feet, "you are the only man in the kingdom whom I would trust with that office, and I shall find means to prove my gratitude for your kindness to your humble servant by doing my utmost to promote the marriage of the Heiress of Bourgogne to Monseigneur the Dauphin. There indeed is a treasure, not, to be sure, in crown-pieces, but in land, which will nobly round out your dominions!"

"Pshaw, Fleming, you are deceiving me!" said the King, knitting his brows, "or you have played me false."

"Nay, Sire, can you doubt my devotion—you, the only man I love?"

"Words, words!" said the King, turning to face the miser. "You ought not to have waited for this to be of use to me. You are selling me your patronage—*Pasques Dieu!* to me—

Louis the Eleventh! Are you the master, I would know, and am I the servant?"

"Ah, my liege," replied the old usurer, "I had hoped to give you an agreeable surprise by news of the communications I had established with the men of Ghent. I expected confirmation of it by the hand of Oosterlinck's apprentice. But what has become of him?"

"Enough," said the King. "Another error. I do not choose that any one should interfere, uncalled for, in my concerns. Enough! I must think all this over."

Maître Cornélius found the agility of youth to fly to the lower room, where his sister was sitting.

"Oh, Jeanne, dear heart, we have somewhere a hoard where I have hidden the thirteen hundred thousand crowns. And I—I am the thief!"

Jeanne Hoogworst rose from her stool, starting to her feet as if the seat were of red-hot iron. The shock was so frightful to an old woman accustomed for many years to exhaust herself by voluntary abstinence, that she quaked in every limb and felt a terrible pain in her back. By degrees her color faded, and her face, in which the wrinkles made any change very difficult to detect, gradually fell, while her brother explained to her the disease to which he was a victim, and the strange situation in which they both stood.

"King Louis and I," said he in conclusion, "have just been telling each other as many lies as two miracle-mongers. You see, child, if he were to watch me, he would be sole master of the secret of the treasure. No one in the world but the King can spy on my nocturnal movements. Now I do not know that the King's conscience, near on death as he is, could stand out against thirteen hundred and seventeen thousand crowns. We must be beforehand with him, find the nest, and send all treasure to Ghent. Now you alone——"

Cornélius suddenly stopped short, as if he were gauging the heart of this King, who, at two and twenty, had dreamed of parricide. When the treasurer had made up his mind

as to Louis XI., he hastily rose, as a man in a hurry to escape some danger.

At this sudden movement, his sister, too weak or too strong for such a crisis, fell down flat; she was dead. Cornélius lifted her up and shook her violently, saying:

"This is no time for dying; you will have time enough for that afterwards. Oh! it is all over! Wretched creature, she could never do the right thing——"

He closed her eyes and laid her on the floor. But then the kind and noble feelings that lurked at the bottom of his heart came to the surface, and almost forgetting his undiscovered treasure, he cried out in sorrow:

"My poor companion! what, have I lost you—you who understood me so well? Ah! you were my real treasure. There, there, lies the treasure. With you I have lost all my peace of mind, all my affections. If you had but known how well it would have paid you to live only two nights longer, you would not have died, if only to please me, poor little woman. I say, Jeanne—thirteen hundred and seventeen thousand crowns! No, even that does not rouse you. No, she is dead, quite dead!"

He thereupon sat down and said no more, but two large tears gathered in his eyes and rolled down his hollow cheeks; then with many an "Ah!" and sigh he locked the room up and returned to the King. Louis was startled by the grief he saw written on his old friend's features.

"What is this?" said he.

"Alas, Sire, a misfortune never comes single. My sister is dead. She has gone below before me," and he pointed to the ground with startling emphasis.

"Enough, enough!" said Louis XI., who did not like to hear any mention of death.

"You are my heir. I care for nothing now. Here are my keys. Hang me, if it is your good pleasure. Take everything; search the house; it is full of gold. I give it all to you."

"Come, come, gossip," said the King, half moved by the

sight of this strange anguish, "we will discover the hoard some fine night, and the sight of so much riches will revive your taste for life. I will come again this week."

"Whenever Your Majesty pleases."

At these words, the King, who had gone a few steps towards the door, turned sharply round, and the two men looked at each other with an expression that no brush, nor words, could render.

"Good-bye, gossip," said Louis, at last, in a sharp voice, as he put his bonnet straight.

"May God and the Virgin keep you in their good grace!" the usurer replied humbly, as he escorted the King to the street.

After so long a friendship these two men found a barrier raised between them by distrust and money, whereas they had hitherto been quite agreed on matters of money and distrust; but they knew each other so well, they were so much in the habit of intimacy, that the King could guess from the miser's tone as he rashly said, "Whenever Your Majesty pleases," the annoyance his visits would thenceforth be to his treasurer, just as Cornélius had discerned a declaration of war in the way Louis had said "Good-bye, gossip."

So Louis XI. and his banker parted, very uncertain as to what, for the future, their demeanor was to be. The monarch, indeed, knew the Fleming's secret; but the Fleming on his part could, through his connections, secure the grandest conquest any king of France had yet achieved—that of the domains of the House of Burgundy, which were just then the object of envy to every sovereign in Europe.

The famous Margaret's choice would be guided by the good folks of Ghent and the Flemings about her. Hoogworst's gold and influence would tell for a great deal in the negotiations opened by Desquerdes, the captain to whom Louis XI. had given the command of the army on the Belgian frontier. Thus these two master foxes were in the position of duelists whose strength had been neutralized by some stroke of fate.

And whether it was that from that day the King's health had failed visibly, or that Cornélius in part promoted the arrival in France of Marguerite of Burgundy, who came to Amboise in July 1438 to be married to the Dauphin in the chapel of the château, the King claimed no fine from his treasurer and no trial was held; but they remained in the half-cordial terms of an armed friendship.

Happily for the miser, a rumor got about that his sister had committed the thefts, and that she had been privily executed by Tristan. Otherwise, and if the true story had become known, the whole town would have risen in arms to destroy the Malemaison before the King could possibly have defended it.

However, if all this historical guesswork has some foundation with regard to Louis XI.'s inaction, Master Cornélius Hoogworst cannot be accused of supineness. He spent the first days after this fatal morning in a constant hurry. Like a beast of prey shut up in a cage, he came and went, scenting gold in every corner of his dwelling; he examined every cranny; he tapped the walls; he demanded his treasure of the trees in the garden, of the foundations, of the turret roofs, of earth, and of heaven. Often he would stand for hours looking at everything around him, his eyes searching vacancy. He tried the miracles and second-sight of magic powers, endeavoring to see his gold through space and solid obstacles.

He was constantly absorbed in one overwhelming thought, consumed by an idea that gnawed at his vitals, and yet more cruelly racked by the perennial torments of his duel with himself, since his love of gold had turned to rend itself; it was a sort of incomplete suicide comprehending all the pangs of living and of dying. Never had a vice so effectually entrapped itself; for the miser who inadvertently locks himself into the subterranean cell where his wealth is buried, has, like Sardanapalus, the satisfaction of perishing in the midst of it. But Cornélius, at once the robber and the robbed, and in the secret of neither, possessed, and yet did

not possess, his treasures—a quite new, quite whimsical form of torture, but perpetually excruciating.

Sometimes, almost oblivious, he would leave the little wicket of his door open, and then the passers-by could see the shriveled old man standing in the middle of his neglected garden, perfectly motionless, and looking at any who stopped to gaze at him, with a fixed stare, a lurid glare, that froze them with terror. If by chance he went out into the streets of the town, you would have thought he was a stranger; he never knew where he was, nor whether it was the sun or the moon that were shining. He would often ask his way of the persons he met, fancying himself at Ghent, and he seemed always to be looking for his lost treasure.

The most irrepressible and most incorporate of all human ideas,—that by which a man identifies himself by creating outside and apart from his person the whole fictitious entity which he calls his property,—this demon idea had its talons constantly clutching at the miser's soul.

Then, in the midst of his torments, Fear would rise up with all the feelings that come in its train. For, in fact, two men knew his secret—the secret which he himself did not know. Louis XI. or Coyctier might post their spies to watch his movements while he was asleep, and discover the unknown gulf into which he had flung his wealth with the blood of so many innocent men; for Remorse kept watch with Fear.

To preserve his lost riches from being snatched from him while he lived, during the early days after his disaster, he took the utmost precaution to avoid sleeping, and his connection with the commercial world enabled him to procure the strongest anti-narcotics. His wakeful nights must have been terrible; he was alone to struggle against the night and silence, against remorse and fear, and all the thoughts that man has most effectually personified—instinctively, no doubt, in obedience to some law of the mind, true, though not yet proved.

In short, this man, strong as he was; this heart, annealed

by the life of politics and commerce; this genius, though unknown to history,—was doomed to succumb under the horrors of the torments he himself had created. Crushed by some reflection even more cruel than all that had gone before, he cut his throat with a razor.

His death almost exactly coincided in time with the King's, so that the House of Evil was plundered by the mob. Some of the older inhabitants of the province asserted that a revenue farmer named Bohier had found the extortioner's treasure, and had employed it in building the beginnings of the château of Chenonceaux, that wonderful palace which, in spite of the lavish outlay of several kings and the fine taste of Diane de Poitiers and her rival Catherine de' Medici, is still unfinished.

Happily for Marie de Sassenage, the Comte de Saint-Vallier died, as is well known, as ambassador to Venice. The family did not become extinct. After the Count's departure his wife had a son, whose fortunes were famous in the history of France under the reign of François I. He was saved by his daughter, the famous Diane de Poitiers, Louis XI.'s illegitimate great-granddaughter; and she became the illegal wife, the adored mistress, of Henri II.; for in that noble family bastardy and love were hereditary.

CHÂTEAU DE SACHÉ, *November and December* 1831.

THE ELIXIR OF LIFE

To the Reader

At the very outset of the writer's literary career, a friend, long since dead, gave him the subject of this Study. Later on he found the same story in a collection published about the beginning of the present century. To the best of his belief, it is some stray fancy of the brain of Hoffmann of Berlin; probably it appeared in some German almanac, and was omitted in the published editions of his collected works. The *Comédie Humaine* is sufficiently rich in original creations for the author to own to this innocent piece of plagiarism; when, like the worthy La Fontaine, he has told unwittingly, and after his own fashion, a tale already related by another. This is not one of the hoaxes in vogue in the year 1830, when every author wrote his "tale of horror" for the amusement of young ladies. When you have read the account of Don Juan's decorous parricide, try to picture to yourself the part which would be played under very similar circumstances by honest folk who, in this nineteenth century, will take a man's money and undertake to pay him a life annuity on the faith of a chill, or let a house to an ancient lady for the term of her natural life! Would they be for resuscitating their clients? I should dearly like a connoisseur in consciences to consider how far there is a resemblance between a Don Juan and fathers who marry their children to great expectations. Does humanity, which, according to certain philosophers, is making progress, look on the art of waiting for dead men's shoes as a step in the right direction? To this art we owe several honorable professions, which

open up ways of living on death. There are people who rely entirely on an expected demise; who brood over it, crouching each morning upon a corpse, that serves again for their pillow at night. To this class belong bishops' coadjutors, cardinals' supernumeraries, *tontiniers*, and the like. Add to the list many delicately scrupulous persons eager to buy landed property beyond their means, who calculate with dry logic and in cold blood the probable duration of the life of a father or of a stepmother, some old man or woman of eighty or ninety, saying to themselves, "I shall be sure to come in for it in three years' time, and then——" A murderer is less loathsome to us than a spy. The murderer may have acted on a sudden mad impulse; he may be penitent and amend; but a spy is always a spy, night and day, in bed, at table, as he walks abroad; his vileness pervades every moment of his life. Then what must it be to live when every moment of your life is tainted with murder? And have we not just admitted that a host of human creatures in our midst are led by our laws, customs, and usages to dwell without ceasing on a fellow-creature's death? There are men who put the weight of a coffin into their deliberations as they bargain for Cashmere shawls for their wives, as they go up the staircase of a theatre, or think of going to the Bouffons, or of setting up a carriage; who are murderers in thought when dear ones, with the irresistible charm of innocence, hold up childish foreheads to be kissed with a "Good-night, father!" Hourly they meet the gaze of eyes that they would fain close for ever, eyes that still open each morning to the light, like Belvidero's in this Study. God alone knows the number of those who are parricides in thought. Picture to yourself the state of mind of a man who must pay a life annuity to some old woman whom he scarcely knows; both live in the country with a brook between them, both sides are free to hate cordially, without offending against the social conventions that require two brothers to wear a mask if the older

will succeed to the entail, and the other to the fortune of a younger son. The whole civilization of Europe turns upon the principle of hereditary succession as upon a pivot; it would be madness to subvert the principle; but could we not, in an age that prides itself upon its mechanical inventions, perfect this essential portion of the socal machinery?

If the author has preserved the old-fashioned style of address *To the Reader* before a work wherein he endeavors to represent all literary forms, it is for the purpose of making a remark that applies to several of the Studies, and very specially to this. Every one of his compositions has been based upon ideas more or less novel, which, as it seemed to him, needed literary expression; he can claim priority for certain forms and for certain ideas which have since passed into the domain of literature, and have there, in some instances, become common property; so that the date of the first publication of each Study cannot be a matter of indifference to those of his readers who would fain do him justice.

Reading brings us unknown friends, and what friend is like a reader? We have friends in our own circle who read nothing of ours. The author hopes to pay his debt, by dedicating this work *Diis ignotis.*

One winter evening, in a princely palace at Ferrara, Don Juan Belvidero was giving a banquet to a prince of the house of Este. A banquet in those times was a marvelous spectacle which only royal wealth or the power of a mighty lord could furnish forth. Seated about a table lit up with perfumed tapers, seven laughter-loving women were interchanging sweet talk. The white marble of the noble works of art about them stood out against the red stucco walls, and made strong contrasts with the rich Turkey carpets. Clad in satin, glittering with gold, and covered with gems less brilliant than their eyes, each told a tale of energetic passions as diverse

as their styles of beauty. They differed neither in their ideas nor in their language; but the expression of their eyes, their glances, occasional gestures, or the tones of their voices supplied a commentary, dissolute, wanton, melancholy, or satirical, to their words.

One seemed to be saying—"The frozen heart of age might kindle at my beauty."

Another—"I love to lounge upon cushions, and think with rapture of my adorers."

A third, a neophyte at these banquets, was inclined to blush. "I feel remorse in the depths of my heart! I am a Catholic, and afraid of hell. But I love you, I love you so that I can sacrifice my hereafter to you."

The fourth drained a cup of Chian wine. "Give me a joyous life!" she cried; "I begin life afresh each day with the dawn. Forgetful of the past, with the intoxication of yesterday's rapture still upon me, I drink deep of life—a whole lifetime of pleasure and of love!"

The woman who sat next to Juan Belvidero looked at him with a feverish glitter in her eyes. She was silent. Then—"I should need no hired bravo to kill my lover if he forsook me!" she cried at last, and laughed, but the marvelously wrought gold comfit box in her fingers was crushed by her convulsive clutch.

"When are you to be Grand Duke?" asked the sixth. There was the frenzy of a Bacchante in her eyes, and her teeth gleamed between the lips parted with a smile of cruel glee.

"Yes, when is that father of yours going to die?" asked the seventh, throwing her bouquet at Don Juan with bewitching playfulness. It was a childish girl who spoke, and the speaker was wont to make sport of sacred things.

"Oh! don't talk about it," cried Don Juan, the young and handsome giver of the banquet. "There is but one eternal father, and, as ill luck will have it, he is mine."

The seven Ferrarese, Don Juan's friends, the Prince himself, gave a cry of horror. Two hundred years later, in the days of Louis XV., people of taste would have laughed at

this witticism. Or was it, perhaps, that at the outset of an orgy there is a certain unwonted lucidity of mind? Despite the taper light, the clamor of the senses, the gleam of gold and silver, the fumes of wine, and the exquisite beauty of the women, there may perhaps have been in the depths of the revelers' hearts some struggling glimmer of reverence for things divine and human, until it was drowned in glowing floods of wine! Yet even then the flowers had been crushed, eyes were growing dull, and drunkenness, in Rabelais' phrase, had "taken possession of them down to their sandals."

During that brief pause a door opened; and as once the Divine presence was revealed at Belshazzar's feast, so now it seemed to be manifest in the apparition of an old white-haired servant, who tottered in, and looked sadly from under knitted brows at the revelers. He gave a withering glance at the garlands, the golden cups, the pyramids of fruit, the dazzling lights of the banquet, the flushed scared faces, the hues of the cushions pressed by the white arms of the women.

"My lord, your father is dying!" he said; and at those solemn words, uttered in hollow tones, a veil of crape seemed to be drawn over the wild mirth.

Don Juan rose to his feet with a gesture to his guests that might be rendered by, "Excuse me; this kind of thing does not happen every day."

Does it so seldom happen that a father's death surprises youth in the full-blown splendor of life, in the midst of the mad riot of an orgy? Death is as unexpected in his caprice as a courtesan in her disdain; but death is truer—Death has never forsaken any man.

Don Juan closed the door of the banqueting-hall; and as he went down the long gallery, through the cold and darkness, he strove to assume an expression in keeping with the part he had to play; he had thrown off his mirthful mood, as he had thrown down his table napkin, at the first thought of this *rôle*. The night was dark. The mute servitor, his guide to the chamber where the dying man lay, lighted the way so dimly that Death, aided by cold, silence, and dark-

ness, and it may be by a reaction of drunkenness, could send some sober thoughts through the spendthrift's soul. He examined his life, and became thoughtful, like a man involved in a lawsuit on his way to the Court.

Bartolommeo Belvidero, Don Juan's father, was an old man of ninety, who had devoted the greatest part of his life to business pursuits. He had acquired vast wealth in many a journey in magical Eastern lands, and knowledge, so it was said, more valuable than the gold and diamonds, which had almost ceased to have any value for him.

"I would give more to have a tooth in my head than for a ruby," he would say at times with a smile. The indulgent father loved to hear Don Juan's story of this and that wild freak of youth. "So long as these follies amuse you, dear boy——" he would say laughingly, as he lavished money on his son. Age never took such pleasure in the sight of youth; the fond father did not remember his own decaying powers while he looked on that brilliant young life.

Bartolommeo Belvidero, at the age of sixty, had fallen in love with an angel of peace and beauty. Don Juan had been the sole fruit of this late and short-lived love. For fifteen years the widower had mourned the loss of his beloved Juana; and to this sorrow of age, his son and his numerous household had attributed the strange habits that he had contracted. He had shut himself up in the least comfortable wing of his palace, and very seldom left his apartments; even Don Juan himself must first ask permission before seeing his father. If this hermit, unbound by vows, came or went in his palace or in the streets of Ferrara, he walked as if he were in a dream, wholly engrossed, like a man at strife with a memory, or a wrestler with some thought.

The young Don Juan might give princely banquets, the palace might echo with clamorous mirth, horses pawed the ground in the courtyards, pages quarreled and flung dice upon the stairs, but Bartolommeo ate his seven ounces of bread daily and drank water. A fowl was occasionally dressed for him, simply that the black poodle, his faithful companion,

might have the bones. Bartolommeo never complained of the noise. If huntsmen's horns and baying dogs disturbed his sleep during his illness, he only said, "Ah! Don Juan has come back again." Never on earth has there been a father so little exacting and so indulgent; and, in consequence, young Belvidero, accustomed to treat his father unceremoniously, had all the faults of a spoiled child. He treated old Bartolommeo as a wilful courtesan treats an elderly adorer; buying indemnity for insolence with a smile, selling good-humor, submitting to be loved.

Don Juan, beholding scene after scene of his younger years, saw that it would be a difficult task to find his father's indulgence at fault. Some new-born remorse stirred the depths of his heart: he felt almost ready to forgive this father now about to die for having lived so long. He had an accession of filial piety, like a thief's return in thought to honesty at the prospect of a million adroitly stolen.

Before long Don Juan had crossed the lofty, chilly suite of rooms in which his father lived; the penetrating influences of the damp close air, the mustiness diffused by old tapestries and presses thickly covered with dust had passed into him, and now he stood in the old man's antiquated room, in the repulsive presence of the deathbed, beside a dying fire. A flickering lamp on a Gothic table sent broad uncertain shafts of light, fainter or brighter, across the bed, so that the dying man's face seemed to wear a different look at every moment. The bitter wind whistled through the crannies of the ill-fitting casements; there was a smothered sound of snow lashing the windows. The harsh contrast of these sights and sounds with the scenes which Don Juan had just quitted was so sudden that he could not help shuddering. He turned cold as he came towards the bed; the lamp flared in a sudden vehement gust of wind and lighted up his father's face; the features were wasted and distorted; the skin that cleaved to their bony outlines had taken wan livid hues, all the more ghastly by force of contrast with the white pillows on which he lay. The muscles about the toothless mouth had con-

tracted with pain and drawn apart the lips; the moans that issued between them with appalling energy found an accompaniment in the howling of the storm without.

In spite of every sign of coming dissolution, the most striking thing about the dying face was its incredible power. It was no ordinary spirit that wrestled there with Death. The eyes glared with strange fixity of gaze from the cavernous sockets hollowed by disease. It seemed as if Bartolommeo sought to kill some enemy sitting at the foot of his bed by the intent gaze of dying eyes. That steady remorseless look was the more appalling because the head that lay upon the pillow was passive and motionless as a skull upon a doctor's table. The outlines of the body, revealed by the coverlet, were no less rigid and stiff; he lay there as one dead, save for those eyes. There was something automatic about the moaning sounds that came from the mouth. Don Juan felt something like shame that he must be brought thus to his father's bedside, wearing a courtesan's bouquet, redolent of the fragrance of the banqueting-chamber and the fumes of wine.

"You were enjoying yourself!" the old man cried as he saw his son.

Even as he spoke the pure high notes of a woman's voice, sustained by the sound of the viol on which she accompanied her song, rose above the rattle of the storm against the casements, and floated up to the chamber of death. Don Juan stopped his ears against the barbarous answer to his father's speech.

"I bear you no grudge, my child," Bartolommeo went on.

The words were full of kindness, but they hurt Don Juan; he could not pardon this heart-searching goodness on his father's part.

"What a remorseful memory for me!" he cried, hypocritically.

"Poor Juanino," the dying man went on, in a smothered voice, "I have always been so kind to you, that you could not surely desire my death?"

"Oh, if it were only possible to keep you here by giving up a part of my own life!" cried Don Juan.

("We can always *say* this sort of thing," the spendthrift thought: "it is as if I laid the whole world at my mistress' feet.")

The thought had scarcely crossed his mind when the old poodle barked. Don Juan shivered: the response was so intelligent that he fancied the dog must have understood him.

"I was sure that I could count upon you, my son!" cried the dying man. "I shall live. So be it; you shall be satisfied. I shall live, but without depriving you of a single day of your life."

"He is raving," thought Don Juan. Aloud he added, "Yes, dearest father, yes; you shall live, of course, as long as I live, for your image will be for ever in my heart."

"It is not that kind of life that I mean," said the old noble, summoning all his strength to sit up in bed; for a thrill of doubt ran through him, one of those suspicions that come into being under a dying man's pillow. "Listen, my son," he went on, in a voice grown weak with that last effort, "I have no more wish to give up life than you to give up wine and mistresses, horses and hounds, and hawks and gold——"

"I can well believe it," thought the son; and he knelt down by the bed and kissed Bartolommeo's cold hands. "But, father, my dear father," he added aloud, "we must submit to the will of God."

"I am God!" muttered the dying man.

"Do not blaspheme!" cried the other, as he saw the menacing expression on his father's face. "Beware what you say; you have received extreme unction, and I should be inconsolable if you were to die before my eyes in mortal sin."

"Will you listen to me?" cried Bartolommeo, and his mouth twitched.

Don Juan held his peace; an ugly silence prevailed. Yet above the muffled sound of the beating of the snow against the windows rose the sounds of the beautiful voice and the viol in unison, far off and faint as the dawn. The dying man smiled.

"Thank you," he said, "for bringing those singing voices and the music, a banquet, young and lovely women with fair faces and dark tresses, all the pleasure of life! Bid them wait for me; for I am about to begin life anew."

"The delirium is at its height," said Don Juan to himself.

"I have found out a way of coming to life again," the speaker went on. "There, just look in that table drawer, press the spring hidden by the griffin, and it will fly open."

"I have found it, father."

"Well, then, now take out a little phial of rock crystal."

"I have it."

"I have spent twenty years in——" but even as he spoke the old man felt how very near the end had come, and summoned all his dying strength to say, "As soon as the breath is out of me, rub me all over with that liquid, and I shall come to life again."

"There is very little of it," his son remarked.

Though Bartolommeo could no longer speak, he could still hear and see. When those words dropped from Don Juan, his head turned with appalling quickness, his neck was twisted like the throat of some marble statue which the sculptor had condemned to remain stretched out for ever, the wide eyes had come to have a ghastly fixity.

He was dead, and in death he lost his last and sole illusion.

He had sought a shelter in his son's heart, and it had proved to be a sepulchre, a pit deeper than men dig for their dead. The hair on his head had risen and stiffened with horror, his agonized glance still spoke. He was a father rising in just anger from his tomb, to demand vengeance at the throne of God.

"There! it is all over with the old man!" cried Don Juan.

He had been so interested in holding the mysterious phial to the lamp, as a drinker holds up the wine-bottle at the end of a meal, that he had not seen his father's eyes fade. The cowering poodle looked from his master to the elixir,

just as Don Juan himself glanced again and again from his father to the flask. The lamplight flickered. There was a deep silence; the viol was mute. Juan Belvidero thought that he saw his father stir, and trembled. The changeless gaze of those accusing eyes frightened him; he closed them hastily, as he would have closed a loose shutter swayed by the wind of an autumn night. He stood there motionless, lost in a world of thought.

Suddenly the silence was broken by a shrill sound like the creaking of a rusty spring. It startled Don Juan; he all but dropped the phial. A sweat, colder than the blade of a dagger, issued through every pore. It was only a piece of clockwork, a wooden cock that sprang out and crowed three times, an ingenious contrivance by which the learned of that epoch were wont to be awakened at the appointed hour to begin the labors of the day. Through the windows there came already a flush of dawn. The thing, composed of wood, and cords, and wheels, and pulleys, was more faithful in its service than he in his duty to Bartolommeo—he, a man with that peculiar piece of human mechanism within him that we call a heart.

Don Juan the sceptic shut the flask again in the secret drawer in the Gothic table—he meant to run no more risks of losing the mysterious liquid.

Even at that solemn moment he heard the murmur of a crowd in the gallery, a confused sound of voices, of stifled laughter and light footfalls, and the rustling of silks—the sounds of a band of revelers struggling for gravity. The door opened, and in came the Prince and Don Juan's friends, the seven courtesans, and the singers, dishevelled and wild like dancers surprised by the dawn, when the tapers that have burned through the night struggle with the sunlight.

They had come to offer the customary condolence to the young heir.

"Oho! is poor Don Juan really taking this seriously?" said the Prince in Brambilla's ear.

"Well, his father was very good," she returned.

But Don Juan's night-thoughts had left such unmistak-

able traces on his features, that the crew was awed into silence. The men stood motionless. The women, with wine-parched lips and cheeks marbled with kisses, knelt down and began a prayer. Don Juan could scarce help trembling when he saw splendor and mirth and laughter and song and youth and beauty and power bowed in reverence before Death. But in those times, in that adorable Italy of the sixteenth century, religion and revelry went hand in hand; and religious excess became a sort of debauch, and a debauch a religious rite!

The Prince grasped Don Juan's hand affectionately, then when all faces had simultaneously put on the same grimace —half-gloomy, half-indifferent—the whole masque disappeared, and left the chamber of death empty. It was like an allegory of life.

As they went down the staircase, the Prince spoke to Rivabarella: "Now, who would have taken Don Juan's impiety for a boast? He loves his father."

"Did you see that black dog?" asked La Brambilla.

"He is enormously rich now," sighed Bianca Cavatolino.

"What is that to me?" cried the proud Veronese (she who had crushed the comfit-box).

"What does it matter to you, forsooth?" cried the Duke. "With his money he is as much a prince as I am."

At first Don Juan was swayed hither and thither by countless thoughts, and wavered between two decisions. He took counsel with the gold heaped up by his father, and returned in the evening to the chamber of death, his whole soul brimming over with hideous selfishness. He found all his household busy there. "His lordship" was to lie in state to-morrow; all Ferrara would flock to behold the wonderful spectacle; and the servants were busy decking the room and the couch on which the dead man lay. At a sign from Don Juan all his people stopped, dumfounded and trembling.

"Leave me alone here," he said, and his voice was changed, "and do not return until I leave the room."

When the footsteps of the old servitor, who was the last to go, echoed but faintly along the paved gallery, Don Juan

hastily locked the door, and, sure that he was quite alone, "Let us try," he said to himself.

Bartolommeo's body was stretched on a long table. The embalmers had laid a sheet over it, to hide from all eyes the dreadful spectacle of a corpse so wasted and shrunken that it seemed like a skeleton, and only the face was uncovered. This mummy-like figure lay in the middle of the room. The limp clinging linen lent itself to the outlines it shrouded—so sharp, bony, and thin. Large violet patches had already begun to spread over the face; the embalmers' work had not been finished too soon.

Don Juan, strong as he was in his scepticism, felt a tremor as he opened the magic crystal flask. When he stood over that face, he was trembling so violently, that he was actually obliged to wait for a moment. But Don Juan had acquired an early familiarity with evil; his morals had been corrupted by a licentious court, a reflection worthy of the Duke of Urbino crossed his mind, and it was a keen sense of curiosity that goaded him into boldness. The devil himself might have whispered the words that were echoing through his brain, *Moisten one of the eyes with the liquid!* He took up a linen cloth, moistened it sparingly with the precious fluid, and passed it lightly over the right eyelid of the corpse. The eye unclosed. . . .

"Aha!" said Don Juan. He gripped the flask tightly, as we clutch in dreams the branch from which we hang suspended over a precipice.

For the eye was full of life. It was a young child's eye set in a death's head; the light quivered in the depths of its youthful liquid brightness. Shaded by the long dark lashes, it sparkled like the strange lights that travelers see in lonely places in winter nights. The eye seemed as if it would fain dart fire at Don Juan; he saw it thinking, upbraiding, condemning, uttering accusations, threatening doom; it cried aloud, and gnashed upon him. All anguish that shakes human souls was gathered there; supplications the most tender, the wrath of kings, the love in a girl's heart pleading with the

headsman; then, and after all these, the deeply searching glance a man turns on his fellows as he mounts the last step of the scaffold. Life so dilated in this fragment of life that Don Juan shrank back; he walked up and down the room, he dared not meet that gaze, but he saw nothing else. The ceiling and the hangings, the whole room was sown with living points of fire and intelligence. Everywhere those gleaming eyes haunted him.

"He might very likely have lived another hundred years!" he cried involuntarily. Some diabolical influence had drawn him to his father, and again he gazed at that luminous spark. The eyelid closed and opened again abruptly; it was like a woman's sign of assent. It was an intelligent movement. If a voice had cried "Yes!" Don Juan could not have been more startled.

"What is to be done?" he thought.

He nerved himself to try to close the white eyelid. In vain.

"Kill it? That would perhaps be parricide," he debated with himself.

"Yes," the eye said, with a strange sardonic quiver of the lid.

"Aha!" said Don Juan to himself, "here is witchcraft at work!" And he went closer to crush the thing. A great tear trickled over the hollow cheeks, and fell on Don Juan's hand.

"It is scalding!" he cried. He sat down. The struggle exhausted him; it was as if, like Jacob of old, he was wrestling with an angel.

At last he rose. "So long as there is no blood——" he muttered.

Then, summoning all the courage needed for a coward's crime, he extinguished the eye, pressing it with the linen cloth, turning his head away. A terrible groan startled him. It was the poor poodle, who died with a long-drawn howl.

"Could the brute have been in the secret?" thought Don Juan, looking down at the faithful creature.

Don Juan Belvidero was looked upon as a dutiful son. He reared a white marble monument on his father's tomb, and employed the greatest sculptors of the time upon it. He did not recover perfect ease of mind till the day when his father knelt in marble before Religion, and the heavy weight of the stone had sealed the mouth of the grave in which he had laid the one feeling of remorse that sometimes flitted through his soul in moments of physical weariness.

He had drawn up a list of the wealth heaped up by the old merchant in the East, and he became a miser: had he not to provide for a second lifetime? His views of life were the more profound and penetrating; he grasped its significance, as a whole, the better, because he saw it across a grave. All men, all things, he analyzed once and for all; he summed up the Past, represented by its records; the Present in the law, its crystallized form; the Future, revealed by religion. He took spirit and matter, and flung them into his crucible, and found—Nothing. Thenceforward he became Don Juan.

At the outset of his life, in the prime of youth and the beauty of youth, he knew the illusions of life for what they were; he despised the world, and made the utmost of the world. His felicity could not have been of the bourgeois kind, rejoicing in periodically recurrent *bouilli*, in the comforts of a warming-pan, a lamp of a night, and a new pair of slippers once a quarter. Nay, rather he seized upon existence as a monkey snatches a nut, and after no long toying with it, proceeds deftly to strip off the mere husks to reach the savory kernel within.

Poetry and the sublime transports of passion scarcely reached ankle-depth with him now. He in nowise fell into the error of strong natures who flatter themselves now and again that little souls will believe in a great soul, and are willing to barter their own lofty thoughts of the future for the small change of our life-annuity ideas. He, even as they, had he chosen, might well have walked with his feet on the earth and his head in the skies; but he liked better to

sit on earth, to wither the soft, fresh, fragrant lips of a woman with kisses, for, like Death, he devoured everything without scruple as he passed; he would have full fruition; he was an Oriental lover, seeking prolonged pleasures easily obtained. He sought nothing but a woman in women, and cultivated cynicism, until it became with him a habit of mind. When his mistress, from the couch on which she lay, soared and was lost in regions of ecstatic bliss, Don Juan followed suit, earnest, expansive, serious as any German student. But he said I, while she, in the transports of intoxication, said We. He understood to admiration the art of abandoning himself to the influence of a woman: he was always clever enough to make her believe that he trembled like some boy fresh from college before his first partner at a dance, when he asks her, "Do you like dancing?" But, no less, he could be terrible at need, could unsheathe a formidable sword and make short work of Commandants. Banter lurked beneath his simplicity, mocking laughter behind his tears—for he had tears at need, like any woman nowadays who says to her husband, "Give me a carriage, or I shall go into a consumption."

For the merchant the world is a bale of goods or a mass of circulating bills; for most young men it is a woman, and for a woman here and there it is a man; for a certain order of mind it is a salon, a coterie, a quarter of the town, or some single city; but Don Juan found his world in himself.

This model of grace and dignity, this captivating wit, moored his bark by every shore; but wherever he was led he was never carried away, and was only steered in a course of his own choosing. The more he saw, the more he doubted. He watched men narrowly, and saw how, beneath the surface, courage was often rashness; and prudence, cowardice; generosity, a clever piece of calculation; justice, a wrong; delicacy, pusillanimity; honesty, a *modus vivendi;* and by some strange dispensation of fate, he must see that those who at heart were really honest, scrupulous, just, generous, prudent, or brave were held cheaply by their fellow-men.

"What a cold-blooded jest!" said he to himself. "It was not devised by a God."

From that time forth he renounced a better world, and never uncovered himself when a Name was pronounced, and for him the carven saints in the churches became works of art. He understood the mechanism of society too well to clash wantonly with its prejudices; for, after all, he was not as powerful as the executioner, but he evaded social laws with the wit and grace so well rendered in the scene with M. Dimanche. He was, in fact, Molière's Don Juan, Goethe's Faust, Byron's Manfred, Mathurin's Melmoth—great allegorical figures drawn by the greatest men of genius in Europe, to which Mozart's harmonies, perhaps, do no more justice that Rossini's lyre. Terrible allegorical figures that shall endure as long as the principle of evil existing in the heart of man shall produce a few copies from century to century. Sometimes the type becomes half-human when incarnate as a Mirabeau, sometimes it is an inarticulate force in a Bonaparte, sometimes it overwhelms the universe with irony as a Rabelais; or, yet again, it appears when a Maréchal de Richelieu elects to laugh at human beings instead of scoffing at things, or when one of the most famous of our ambassadors goes a step further and scoffs at both men and things. But the profound genius of Juan Belvidero anticipated and resumed all these. All things were a jest to him. His was the life of a mocking spirit. All men, all institutions, all realities, all ideas were within its scope. As for eternity, after half an hour of familiar conversation with Pope Julius II. he had said, laughing:

"If it is absolutely necessary to make a choice, I would rather believe in God than in the Devil; power combined with goodness always offers more resources than the spirit of Evil can boast."

"Yes; still God requires repentance in this present world——"

"So you always think of your indulgences," returned Don Juan Belvidero. "Well, well, I have another life in reserve in which to repent of the sins of my previous existence."

"Oh, if you regard old age in that light," cried the Pope, "you are in danger of canonization——"

"After your elevation to the Papacy nothing is incredible." And they went to watch the workmen who were building the huge basilica dedicated to Saint Peter.

"Saint Peter, as the man of genius who laid the foundation of our double power," the Pope said to Don Juan, "deserves this monument. Sometimes, though, at night, I think that a deluge will wipe all this out as with a sponge, and it will be all to begin over again."

Don Juan and the Pope began to laugh; they understood each other. A fool would have gone on the morrow to amuse himself with Julius II. in Raphael's studio or at the delicious Villa Madama; not so Belvidero. He went to see the Pope as pontiff, to be convinced of any doubts that he (Don Juan) entertained. Over his cups the Rovere would have been capable of denying his own infallibility and of commenting on the Apocalypse.

Nevertheless, this legend has not been undertaken to furnish materials for future biographies of Don Juan; it is intended to prove to honest folk that Belvidero did not die in a duel with stone, as some lithographers would have us believe.

When Don Juan Belvidero reached the age of sixty he settled in Spain, and there in his old age he married a young and charming Andalusian wife. But of set purpose he was neither a good husband nor a good father. He had observed that we are never so tenderly loved as by women to whom we scarcely give a thought. Doña Elvira had been devoutly brought up by an old aunt in a castle a few leagues from San Lucar in a remote part of Andalusia. She was a model of devotion and grace. Don Juan foresaw that this would be a woman who would struggle long against a passion before yielding, and therefore hoped to keep her virtuous until his death. It was a jest undertaken in earnest, a game of chess which he meant to reserve till his old age. Don Juan had learned wisdom from the mistakes made by his father

Bartolommeo; he determined that the least details of his life in old age should be subordinated to one object—the success of the drama which was to be played out upon his death-bed.

For the same reason the largest part of his wealth was buried in the cellars of his palace at Ferrara, whither he seldom went. As for the rest of his fortune, it was invested in a life annuity, with a view to give his wife and children an interest in keeping him alive; but this Machiavellian piece of foresight was scarcely necessary. His son, young Felipe Belvidero, grew up as a Spaniard as religiously conscientious as his father was irreligious, in virtue, perhaps, of the old rule, "A miser has a spendthrift son." The Abbot of San-Lucar was chosen by Don Juan to be the director of the consciences of the Duchess of Belvidero and her son Felipe. The ecclesiastic was a holy man, well shaped, and admirably well proportioned. He had fine dark eyes, a head like that of Tiberius, worn with fasting, bleached by an ascetic life, and, like all dwellers in the wilderness, was daily tempted. The noble lord had hopes, it may be, of despatching yet another monk before his term of life was out.

But whether because the Abbot was every whit as clever as Don Juan himself, or Doña Elvira possessed more discretion or more virtue than Spanish wives are usually credited with, Don Juan was compelled to spend his declining years beneath his own roof, with no more scandal under it than if he had been an ancient country parson. Occasionally he would take wife and son to task for negligence in the duties of religion, peremptorily insisting that they should carry out to the letter the obligations imposed upon the flock by the Court of Rome. Indeed, he was never so well pleased as when he had set the courtly Abbot discussing some case of conscience with Doña Elvira and Felipe.

At length, however, despite the prodigious care that the great magnifico, Don Juan Belvidero, took of himself, the days of decrepitude came upon him, and with those days the constant importunity of physical feebleness, an importunity all the more distressing by contrast with the wealth of memo-

ries of his impetuous youth and the sensual pleasures of middle age. The unbeliever who in the height of his cynical humor had been wont to persuade others to believe in laws and principles at which he scoffed, must repose nightly upon a *perhaps*. The great Duke, the pattern of good breeding, the champion of many a carouse, the proud ornament of Courts, the man of genius, the graceful winner of hearts that he had wrung as carelessly as a peasant twists an osier withe, was now the victim of a cough, of a ruthless sciatica, of an unmannerly gout. His teeth gradually deserted him, as at the end of an evening the fairest and best-dressed women take their leave one by one till the room is left empty and desolate. The active hands became palsy-stricken, the shapely legs tottered as he walked. At last, one night, a stroke of apoplexy caught him by the throat in its icy clutch. After that fatal day he grew morose and stern.

He would reproach his wife and son with their devotion, casting it in their teeth that the affecting and thoughtful care that they lavished so tenderly upon him was bestowed because they knew that his money was invested in a life annuity. Then Elvira and Felipe would shed bitter tears and redouble their caresses, and the wicked old man's insinuating voice would take an affectionate tone—"Ah, you will forgive me, will you not, dear friends, dear wife? I am rather a nuisance. Alas, Lord in heaven, how canst Thou use me as the instrument by which Thou provest these two angelic creatures? I who should be the joy of their lives am become their scourge . . ."

In this manner he kept them tethered to his pillow, blotting out the memory of whole months of fretfulness and unkindness in one short hour when he chose to display for them the ever-new treasures of his pinchbeck tenderness and charm of manner—a system of paternity that yielded him an infinitely better return than his own father's indulgence had formerly gained. At length his bodily infirmities reached a point when the task of laying him in bed became as difficult as the navigation of a felucca in the perils of an intricate channel. Then came the day of his death; and this brilliant

sceptic, whose mental faculties alone had survived the most dreadful of all destructions, found himself between his two special antipathies—the doctor and the confessor. But he was jovial with them. Did he not see a light gleaming in the future beyond the veil? The pall that is like lead for other men was thin and translucent for him; the light-footed, irresistible delights of youth danced beyond it like shadows.

It was on a beautiful summer evening that Don Juan felt the near approach of death. The sky of Spain was serene and cloudless; the air was full of the scent of orange-blossom; the stars shed clear, pure gleams of light; nature without seemed to give the dying man assurance of resurrection; a dutiful and obedient son sat there watching him with loving and respectful eyes. Towards eleven o'clock he desired to be left alone with this single-hearted being.

"Felipe," said the father, in tones so soft and affectionate that the young man trembled, and tears of gladness came to his eyes; never had that stern father spoken his name in such a tone. "Listen, my son," the dying man went on. "I am a great sinner. All my life long, however, I have thought of my death. I was once the friend of the great Pope Julius II.; and that illustrious Pontiff, fearing lest the excessive excitability of my senses should entangle me in mortal sin between the moment of my death and the time of my anointing with the holy oil, gave me a flask that contains a little of the holy water that once issued from the rock in the wilderness. I have kept the secret of this squandering of a treasure belonging to Holy Church, but I am permitted to reveal the mystery *in articulo mortis* to my son. You will find the flask in a drawer in that Gothic table that always stands by the head of the bed. . . . The precious little crystal flask may be of use yet again for you, dearest Felipe. Will you swear to me, by your salvation, to carry out my instructions faithfully?"

Felipe looked at his father, and Don Juan was too deeply learned in the lore of the human countenance not to die in

peace with that look as his warrant, as his own father had died in despair at meeting the expression in his son's eyes.

"You deserved to have a better father," Don Juan went on. "I dare to confess, my child, that while the reverend Abbot of San-Lucar was administering the Viaticum I was thinking of the incompatibility of the co-existence of two powers so infinite as God and the Devil——"

"Oh, father!"

"And I said to myself, when Satan makes his peace he ought surely to stipulate for the pardon of his followers, or he will be the veriest scoundrel. The thought haunted me; so I shall go to hell, my son, unless you carry out my wishes."

"Oh, quick; tell me quickly, father."

"As soon as I have closed my eyes," Don Juan went on, "and that may be in a few minutes, you must take my body before it grows cold and lay it on a table in this room. Then put out the lamp; the light of the stars should be sufficient. Take off my clothes, reciting *Aves* and *Paters* the while, raising your soul to God in prayer, and carefully anoint my lips and eyes with this holy water; begin with the face, and proceed successively to my limbs and the rest of my body; my dear son, the power of God is so great that you must be astonished at nothing."

Don Juan felt death so near, that he added in a terrible voice, "Be careful not to drop the flask."

Then he breathed his last gently in the arms of his son, and his son's tears fell fast over his sardonic, haggard features.

It was almost midnight when Don Felipe Belvidero laid his father's body upon the table. He kissed the sinister brow and the gray hair; then he put out the lamp.

By the soft moonlight that lit strange gleams across the country without, Felipe could dimly see his father's body, a vague white thing among the shadows. The dutiful son moistened a linen cloth with the liquid, and, absorbed in prayer, he anointed the revered face. A deep silence reigned. Felipe heard faint, indescribable rustlings; it was the breeze

in the tree-tops, he thought. But when he had moistened the right arm, he felt himself caught by the throat, a young strong hand held him in a tight grip—it was his father's hand! He shrieked aloud; the flask dropped from his hand and broke in pieces. The liquid evaporated; the whole household hurried into the room, holding torches aloft. That shriek had startled them, and filled them with as much terror as if the Trumpet of the Angel sounding on the Last Day had rung through earth and sky. The room was full of people, and a horror-stricken crowd beheld the fainting Felipe upheld by the strong arm of his father, who clutched him by the throat. They saw another thing, an unearthly spectacle—Don Juan's face grown young and beautiful as Antinoüs, with its dark hair and brilliant eyes and red lips, a head that made horrible efforts, but could not move the dead, wasted body.

An old servitor cried, "A miracle! a miracle!" and all the Spaniards echoed, "A miracle! a miracle!"

Doña Elvira, too pious to attribute this to magic, sent for the Abbot of San-Lucar; and the Prior beholding the miracle with his own eyes, being a clever man, and withal an Abbot desirous of augmenting his revenues, determined to turn the occasion to profit. He immediately gave out that Don Juan would certainly be canonized; he appointed a day for the celebration of the apotheosis in his convent, which thenceforward, he said, should be called the convent of San Juan of Lucar. At these words a sufficiently facetious grimace passed over the features of the late Duke.

The taste of the Spanish people for ecclesiastical solemnities is so well known, that is should not be difficult to imagine the religious pantomime by which the Convent of San-Lucar celebrated the translation of the *blessed Don Juan Belvidero* to the abbey-church. The tale of the partial resurrection had spread so quickly from village to village, that a day or two after the death of the illustrious nobleman the report had reached every place within fifty miles of San-Lucar, and it was as good as a play to see the roads covered already with crowds flocking in on all sides, their curiosity whetted

still further by the prospect of a *Te Deum* sung by torch-light. The old abbey church of San-Lucar, a marvelous building erected by the Moors, a mosque of Allah, which for three centuries had heard the name of Christ, could not hold the throng that poured in to see the ceremony. Hidalgos in their velvet mantles, with their good swords at their sides, swarmed like ants, and were so tightly packed in among the pillars that they had not room to bend the knees, which never bent save to God. Charming peasant girls, in the basquina that defines the luxuriant outlines of their figures, lent an arm to white-haired old men. Young men, with eyes of fire, walked beside aged crones in holiday array. Then came couples tremulous with joy, young lovers led thither by curiosity, newly-wedded folk; children timidly clasping each other by the hand. This throng, so rich in coloring, in vivid contrasts, laden with flowers, enameled like a meadow, sent up a soft murmur through the quiet night. Then the great doors of the church opened.

Late comers who remained without saw afar, through the three great open doorways, a scene of which the theatrical illusions of modern opera can give but a faint idea. The vast church was lighted up by thousands of candles, offered by saints and sinners alike eager to win the favor of this new candidate for canonization, and these self-commending illuminations turned the great building into an enchanted fairyland. The black archways, the shafts and capitals, the recessed chapels with gold and silver gleaming in their depths, the galleries, the Arab traceries, all the most delicate outlines of that delicate sculpture, burned in the excess of light like the fantastic figures in the red heart of a brazier. At the further end of the church, above that blazing sea, rose the high altar like a splendid dawn. All the glories of the golden lamps and silver candlesticks, of banners and tassels, of the shrines of the saints and votive offerings, paled before the gorgeous brightness of the reliquary in which Don Juan lay. The blasphemer's body sparkled with gems, and flowers, and crystal, with diamonds and gold, and plumes white as the wings of seraphim; they had set it up on the altar, where

the pictures of Christ had stood. All about him blazed a host of tall candles; the air quivered in the radiant light. The worthy Abbot of San-Lucar, in pontifical robes, with his mitre set with precious stones, his rochet and golden crosier, sat enthroned in imperial state among his clergy in the choir. Rows of impassive aged faces, silver-haired old men clad in fine linen albs, were grouped about him, as the saints who confessed Christ on earth are set by painters, each in his place, about the throne of God in heaven. The precentor and the dignitaries of the chapter, adorned with the gorgeous insignia of ecclesiastical vanity, came and went through the clouds of incense, like stars upon their courses in the firmament.

When the hour of triumph arrived, the bells awoke the echoes far and wide, and the whole vast crowd raised to God the first cry of praise that begins the *Te Deum*. A sublime cry! High, pure notes, the voices of women in ecstasy, mingled in it with the sterner and deeper voices of men; thousands of voices sent up a volume of sound so mighty, that the straining, groaning organ-pipes could not dominate that harmony. But the shrill sound of children's singing among the choristers, the reverberation of deep bass notes, awakened gracious associations, visions of childhood, and of man in his strength, and rose above that entrancing harmony of human voices blended in one sentiment of love.

Te Deum laudamus!

The chant went up from the black masses of men and women kneeling in the cathedral, like a sudden breaking out of light in darkness, and the silence was shattered as by a peal of thunder. The voices floated up with the clouds of incense that had begun to cast thin bluish veils over the fanciful marvels of the architecture, and the aisles were filled with splendor and perfume and light and melody. Even at the moment when that music of love and thanksgiving soared up to the altar, Don Juan, too well bred not to express his acknowledgments, too witty not to understand how to take a jest, bridled up in his reliquary, and responded with an appalling burst of laughter. Then the Devil having put him in

mind of the risk he was running of being taken for an ordinary man, a saint, a Boniface, a Pantaleone, he interrupted the melody of love by a yell, the thousand voices of hell joined in it. Earth blessed, Heaven banned. The church was shaken to its ancient foundations.

Te Deum laudamus! cried the many voices.

"Go to the devil, brute beasts that you are! *Dios! Dios! Garajos demonios!* Idiots! What fools you are with your dotard God!" and a torrent of imprecations poured forth like a stream of red-hot lava from the mouth of Vesuvius.

"Deus Sabaoth! . . . Sabaoth!" cried the believers.

"You are insulting the majesty of Hell," shouted Don Juan, gnashing his teeth. In another moment the living arm struggled out of the reliquary, and was brandished over the assembly in mockery and despair.

"The saint is blessing us," cried the old women, children, lovers, and the credulous among the crowd.

And note how often we are deceived in the homage we pay; the great man scoffs at those who praise him, and pays compliments now and again to those whom he laughs at in the depths of his heart.

Just as the Abbot, prostrate before the altar, was chanting *"Sancte Johannes, ora pro nobis!"* he heard a voice exclaim sufficiently distinctly: *"O coglione!"*

"What can be going on up there?" cried the Sub-prior, as he saw the reliquary move.

"The saint is playing the devil," replied the Abbot.

Even as he spoke the living head tore itself away from the lifeless body, and dropped upon the sallow cranium of the officiating priest.

"Remember Doña Elvira!" cried the thing, with its teeth set fast in the Abbot's head.

The Abbot's horror-stricken shriek disturbed the ceremony; all the ecclesiastics hurried up and crowded about their chief.

"Idiot, tell us now if there is a God!" the voice cried, as the Abbot, bitten through the brain, drew his last breath.

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